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Making Work-Life Policies and Perceptions Public: An examination of corporate
websites and employee ratings of work-life balance

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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

In

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For my mom, Shay...

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Abstract

Organizational leaders in high-performing companies strive to implement work-life policies and practices that contribute to the company's competitive advantage in meaningful ways. In the United States, leaders often cite business case justifications for work-life benefits by tracing benefits to profit and loss in the form of higher retention, lower absenteeism, and greater productivity, for example. However, a corporate social responsibility case adds to the business case for work-life benefits by recognizing the potential to enhance the company's reputation by demonstrating ethical business practices to public audiences. This study builds on both a business case and social responsibility case to examine the potential relationship between work-life benefits communicated on public-facing corporate websites and employees' work-life balance perceptions. Using quantitative content analysis, work-life benefits were coded by categories into three tiers: Tier 1) foundational business case, Tier 2) modern business case, and Tier 3) progressive corporate social responsibility case. A series of hierarchical regressions were conducted to test the relationships between work-life benefits in each tier and the work-life balance perceptions expressed in employees' ratings of work-life balance on the job search site Indeed.com while controlling for company size and financial performance. The statistical analysis also tested the moderating effects of industry along with organizational culture and manager support. Statistical analyses yielded largely non-significant results. This was likely due to problems with the validity in the work-life balance measure, as evidenced by the multicollinearity observed between work-life balance ratings and other Indeed.com dimension ratings. However, post hoc analyses revealed insights into industry differences in work-life benefit offerings and

offer several insights for organizational leaders. Work-life benefits can serve to attract and retain talented employees when they align with employee expectations and needs, which vary based on industry workforce demographics and norms. Organizational leaders can also institute work-life benefits as part of a corporate social responsibility campaign to demonstrate care for employee and community well-being.

Making Work-Life Policies and Perceptions Public: An examination of corporate websites and employee ratings of work-life balance

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the modern post-industrialist economy, organizational leaders are looking to discover ways of increasing revenue while decreasing costs to maximize profitability, including in the area of human resources. Alongside other human resource-oriented strategies, corporate executives are recognizing the importance of implementing robust work-life policies to attract and retain top talent. Yet, the value of work-life initiatives at the organizational level goes beyond recruiting and supporting talented employees. The broader public audience is increasingly concerned about socially responsible operations, such as the way companies treat their employees through their policies, practices, and cultural norms. From labor unions to debates over minimum wage, parental leave to reduced work hours and employee benefits, leadership decisions regarding how organizations compensate and care for the well-being of their employees has drawn public attention.

In recent years, work-life issues have attracted national news coverage in the U.S. For instance, retail giant, Wal-mart, drew public criticism in 2011 for reducing health care benefits for some of its employees (Greenhouse & Abelson, 2011). The main complaint pointed out how the cutback would potentially impact the financial and physical health of Wal-mart employees and their families. The mainstream media took notice of work-life initiatives in 2017 when American film celebrity Anne Hathaway spoke at the United Nations on International Women's Day, advocating for paid parental leave policies. She cited the U.S. federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which

currently guarantees new parents 12 weeks of unpaid leave, as an example of a deficient national policy while calling for improved paid leave policies internationally. Hathaway also urged policymakers and organizational leaders to go beyond current national legislation by implementing progressive paid parental leave policies at their companies.

Despite a recent rise in the number of companies offering parental leave benefits that exceed the federally regulated FMLA, many workers in the U.S. still lack organizational support for managing work and family roles (Greenfield, 2018).

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016), an average of 13% of private industry employees receive paid family leave benefits with 24% of those in management or professional occupations receiving paid family leave and only 6-7% of workers in production, transportation, and service industries receiving similar benefits. These realities for American workers combined with the current socially conscious climate of the American people make the work-life conversation ripe for exploring the relationship between work-life policies that are publicized on company websites and employee perceptions of work-life balance at those companies.

Companies enter into the public conversation surrounding work-life benefits for employees by communicating about the benefits they offer on their corporate websites. This information in the public sphere has the potential to shape public opinion about the company. As illustrated in the case of Wal-mart, changes in employee benefits can enhance or detract from the company's reputation as a socially responsible organization, which also has implications for the company's bottom line. Online employee reviews give individuals an opportunity to share their perceptions of work-life balance at the organization, demonstrating whether the policies in place are enhancing a stronger sense

of work-life balance. By integrating the traditional business case with the emerging corporate social responsibility (CSR) case, this study examines the interplay between business- and CSR-oriented corporate work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance in the public sphere across three distinct industries.

Organizational Level Perspectives on Work-Life Benefits in the U.S.: Business and Social Responsibility Cases

Work-life balance is typically framed as an individual level concern rather than an organizational issue in both research and practice. Popular definitions of work-life balance point to aspects of the individual employee's ability to manage the boundaries of work and life activities and achieve degrees of satisfaction in each sphere (Kossek & Groggins, 2014). In a rhetorical analysis of company websites from the Fortune list of *Best Companies to Work for*, Hoffman and Cowan (2008) uncovered four themes that represent organization level perspectives on work-life initiatives, posing the individual as the responsible party and the organization as merely the peripheral facilitator in achieving work-life balance. Therefore, even when work-life initiatives are examined from an organization level perspective, they are primarily perceived as a function of individual role management. However, Ollier-Malaterre (2011) pointed out the inherent pitfall of relying on the individual perspective to understand work-life issues, saying "...the 'conciliation' language [of the individualist perspective]...implies that individuals choose how they reconcile roles – although in fact social norms and other layers of context such as public provisions, workplace policies, and supervisor attitudes toward work-life strongly constrain individual decisions" (p. 419). While the majority of work-life research focuses on the individual level (micro), even when taking a managerial or

organizational leadership perspective (Kossek & Friede, 2006), there is a growing body of work-life research at the organizational level (meso) and the national level (macro) (Ollier-Malaterre, 2011). The current study takes a multi-organizational approach to examining work-life balance policies and employee perceptions.

Organizational leaders based in the U.S. are likely to share assumptions about what constitutes effective work-life benefits and the rationale used to implement them. The U.S. national culture is strongly individualistic, according to Hofstede's (1984) cultural dimensions, which may explain why organizational leaders in the U.S. place such a high emphasis on the individual's responsibility for managing work-life intersections (Hoffman & Cowan, 2008; Ollier-Malaterre, 2011). The U.S. also has low national legislation of work-life benefits, leaving the majority of work-life policy-making to the organization's leadership. According to Been et al. (2017), organizational leaders within low work-life legislative countries are more likely to use a business case approach to support work-life policies and practices while company executives in highly regulated national contexts are more likely to justify work-life benefits as socially responsible practices. Therefore, leaders and managers within U.S.-based companies are more likely to respond positively to and cite the business case for work-life initiatives when making decisions.

At the organizational level, work-life research in the U.S. almost exclusively emphasizes the business case for implementing work-life policies, that is, the cost benefits, return on investment, and competitive advantage of instituting work-life policies (Been et al., 2017). In this vein, work-life research at the organizational level has focused on relationships between work-life benefits and business outcomes such as attraction

(Beauregard & Henry, 2009; Catano & Morrow Hines, 2016), retention (Eversole et al., 2012; Friedman & Westring, 2015), turnover (Dex & Bond, 2005; Ropponen et al., 2016; Surienty et al., 2014; Webber et al., 2010), organizational commitment (Nayak & Sahoo, 2015; Smith & Gardner, 2007; Webber et al., 2010), employee engagement (Kaliannan et al., 2016; Rao, 2017; Shankar & Bhatnagar, 2010), burnout/stress (Boamah & Laschinger, 2016; Hobson et al., 2001; Karpinar, et al., 2016; Michel et al., 2014; Morris et al., 2011; Schwartz et al., 2018; Westercamp et al., 2018), absenteeism (Grawitch et al., 2006; Ropponen et al., 2016), job satisfaction (Chen et al., 2015; Dorenkamp & Ruhle, 2019; Haar et al., 2014; Kaliannan et al., 2016; Ropponen et al., 2016), and ultimately, productivity and performance (Abdirahman et al., 2018; de Sivatte et al., 2015; Nayak & Sahoo, 2015; Salimi & Saeidian, 2015; Hobson et al., 2001). These arguments are aimed at persuading organizational decision-makers that offering work-life balance benefits will improve the company's bottom line profits in measurable ways. Although organizational leaders in U.S.-based companies have typically considered work-life benefits as optional offerings rolled out when the market is booming, current research suggests that work-life initiatives should be included as a central facet of creating a sustainable competitive advantage (Kossek et al., 2010).

Despite the fact that U.S. corporate leaders tend to rely heavily on the business case for work-life benefits, scholars and business leaders alike are recognizing the need for a new paradigm for justifying work-life initiatives beyond the business case. For example, Ollier-Malaterre (2011) critiqued the U.S. leadership's over-reliance on the business case argument, claiming that researchers and practitioners must add a citizenship case to the business case. The citizenship case, also called the social responsibility or

ethical case, acknowledges the value of care-work (e.g., childcare, elder care, self-care) and the individual and social impact of engaging in multi-faceted life roles that include work but without excluding other vital activities. From Ollier-Malaterre's non-U.S. leadership perspective, the business case is important but short-sighted on its own. She contends that the citizenship case is critical for incorporating work-life concerns into the long-term fabric of civil society. To this end, U.S. corporate leaders have begun to recognize the need to demonstrate the company's corporate citizenship and social responsibility through documents like corporate social responsibility reports that often include information on work-life balance initiatives and other aspects of employee well-being. Companies that practice and publicize successful corporate social responsibility positively impact key organizational outcomes, such as retention and attraction, brand reputation, and stock valuation. For example, companies with strong CSR are more likely to retain current employees and attract new talent (Flammer & Luo, 2017; Gilani & Jamshed, 2016; Kossek & Groggins, 2014; Stella et al., 2014); consumers have a higher opinion of the brand and are more likely to do business with the company (Costa & Menichini, 2013; Mohr et al., 2001; Öberseder et al., 2013); and share prices increase as investors perceive higher value (Arthur, 2003).

Studying Work-Life Balance Policy and Perception

The current study contributes to the growing interest in the interplay between CSR and business outcomes by examining the relationship between the work-life policies that are publicized on corporate websites and employee perceptions of work-life balance. By examining work-life balance at the intersection of organizational policy and employee perceptions, the current study extends and integrates the business case perspective with

the social responsibility argument. This integrated argument claims that implementing work-life policies and practices is both good for business and the right thing to do, and that doing the right thing is essential to achieving desired business outcomes. Information on work-life balance in the public sphere serves a CSR function by enhancing the company's reputation with stakeholders that potentially leads to improved business case outcomes. When employees have a positive perception of work-life balance at a company, the organization is more likely to realize important business outcomes such as lower absenteeism (Flammer & Luo, 2017) and higher organizational commitment (Mory et al., 2016). However, the question that remains is whether these publicized work-life benefits enhance employee perceptions of work-life balance at these companies.

Research question 1: Is there a relationship between the work-life benefits publicized on corporate websites and employee perceptions of work-life balance?

For the purposes of this study, work-life policies are defined as any employee benefit that falls within one of eight pre-determined work-life benefit categories: 1) time, 2) financial, 3) informational, 4) job design, 5) direct service, 6) supportive organizational culture, 7) safety and wellness, and 8) volunteerism. Categories 1-5, originally developed by Lobel and Kossek (1996), represent primarily business case benefits while categories 6-8 reflect emerging work-life benefits with a CSR case focus (Lehrke, 2018). Further, the eight categories are grouped into three distinct tiers that reflect the progressive nature of the benefits each company offers. *Foundational business case* benefits at Tier 1 include the most basic benefits companies are likely to offer to fulfill legal and industry regulations. *Modern business case* benefits at Tier 2 include popular benefits that many companies choose to offer to demonstrate investment in the

workforce. Finally, *progressive CSR case* benefits at Tier 3 include emerging work-life benefits that support the needs of a diverse workforce and display a commitment to socially responsible business practices. The category framework is outlined in Table 1.

While all work-life benefits can serve a public relations function if used to build the organization's relationship with the public (e.g., on a website or CSR report), not all work-life benefits evoke a CSR focus that leads to enhanced perceptions of the organization (Clark, 2000). Further, how the socially responsible activity is perceived by stakeholders in both value and importance impacts the return on investment for CSR initiatives (Costa & Menichini, 2013). Some work-life benefits, like paid time off and health insurance for full-time employees, are considered standard business practice rather than part of a CSR strategy. Therefore, it is reasonable to expect that companies offering only foundational benefits such as vacation time and health insurance (from Tier 1) will have lower employee perceptions of work-life balance compared to companies that offer more robust benefits including on-site childcare (from Tier 2) and corporate-sponsored volunteer opportunities (from Tier 3).

Hypothesis 1: Companies with a higher number of Tier 2 and Tier 3 benefits will have higher employee perceptions of work-life balance.

CSR policies specifically are designed to promote and publicize the organization's commitment to caring for its people and the places where it operates. This typically includes ethical treatment of employees and suppliers, community involvement and philanthropy, and environmentally responsible practices in manufacturing and other operations (Capriotti & Moreno, 2007). For example, companies that cultivate a supportive work environment, attend to the safety and well-being of workers, and offer

their employees opportunities for community involvement through corporate volunteerism have crafted work-life benefits that display a CSR focus. These policies extend beyond the scope of bottom line business, demonstrating the organization's role as a good corporate citizen. The expectation is that companies with a higher number of CSR-related benefits will be perceived more favorably.

Hypothesis 2: Companies with a higher number of CSR-related work-life benefits (Tier 3) will have higher employee perceptions of work-life balance.

The industries in which companies are embedded influence company work-life policies by exerting pressure to conform to industry norms. As institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977) suggests, organizational leaders may implement work-life policies based on external pressures to imitate other companies within their industry in order to remain competitive. In turn, industry norms influence work-life policies that are deemed appropriate by executives and expected by workers within the industry. The current study includes companies from three distinct industry categories that are likely to differ in substantial ways: 1) wholesale and retail trade, 2) financial activities, and 3) leisure and hospitality. These three industry categories were selected because they represent differences in company characteristics, specifically job status (full- vs. part-time), work schedule (shift, standard, vs. flexible), and workforce diversity (gender and age). Including three distinct industries in the analysis offers the opportunity to explore the impact of industry differences on the relationship between work-life benefits and employee perceptions. Therefore, the second research question along with hypotheses 3-5 explore the potential moderating effects of industry on the relationship between work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance.

Research question 2: How does the relationship between work-life benefits and employee perceptions vary by industry?

Job status, full-time versus part-time, impacts access to work-life benefits and perceptions of work-life balance based on workload. As Kossek and Lautsch (2018) explained, work-life balance is experienced differently depending on full-time and part-time status as well as level within the organization (assuming part-time workers fill lower-level jobs). For instance, the types of work-life benefits offered by an insurance company that employs mainly professional level, full-time individuals are likely to differ from the benefits offered by a retail company that relies predominantly on an entry-level, part-time workforce. Work schedules (e.g., shift work, standard business hours, flexible scheduling) also impact how work-life balance is experienced. Research by Dizaho et al. (2017) showed that employees in professional roles differ from shift workers in their work-life balance attitudes and expectations. Financial activities companies are more likely to offer regular business hours while leisure and hospitality companies have more shift workers, which is likely to diminish positive work-life experiences.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between Tier 2 and 3 work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance will be stronger among companies in the wholesale and retail trade and financial activities industries than leisure and hospitality companies.

Work schedule is one factor in which employees feel able to arrange work and life activities in satisfying ways. For example, research shows that shift work generally diminishes work-life balance (Dizaho et al., 2017) while increased flexibility in work schedule enhances employees' sense of work-life balance by allowing greater latitude in

the way work and life fit together. A higher number of financial activities employees work regular daytime hours compared to their counterparts in the wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries who work more shift schedules (5.1% versus 25.4% and 36.8% shift work, respectively). As a result, Tier 2 benefits that include work schedule as part of job design attributes, are more likely to have a positive effect on employee perceptions of work-life balance for employees in the financial activities industry compared to industries with a higher number of shift workers, namely wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between Tier 2 benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance will be stronger among companies in the financial activities industry than the wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries.

Workforce diversity specifically relates to work-life benefits for men and women and career stage, which is typically linked to employee age groups. Gender diversity within an industry influences the emphasis placed on work-life benefits and attitudes about what benefits are important. For example, within the male-dominated STEM field, companies are more likely to neglect family care policies (e.g., parental leave, on-site childcare) because of a lack of precedence and industry norms that promote work over life activities (Feeney et al., 2014). Leisure and hospitality companies tend to attract a younger workforce in early stages of the career path who do not yet have heavy family demands, which shapes expectations of benefits and perceptions of work-life balance. In contrast, financial activities organizations with greater gender diversity and employees in various career stages, including mid-career, family-oriented professionals, may be more

motivated to provide a range of work-life benefits to meet the needs of a diverse workforce.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between Tier 3 benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance will be stronger among companies in the financial activities industry than the wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries.

In addition to industry differences, organizational culture and manager support are likely to moderate the relationship between the total number of work-life benefits and employee perceptions. For example, research has established a link between leadership style and employee performance with organizational culture moderating that relationship (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000; Schein, 2004). While organizational leaders shape the culture, they are also embedded within it (Schein, 2000; Schneider et al., 2011). Supportive organizational cultures empower employees to manage their work and life spheres by making use of the work-life benefits offered without fear of negative consequences. In these supportive contexts, employees are more likely to experience satisfying work-life balance (Webber et al., 2010). Therefore, higher ratings of a positive organizational culture are likely to enhance the relationship between the total work-life benefits and employee perceptions.

Hypothesis 6: A positive organizational culture strengthens the relationship between total work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance.

Similarly, manager support is essential to giving employees access and permission to use work-life benefits (Bourdeau et al., 2016; Vidal et al., 2012). Research suggests that managers perform a gatekeeping role when it comes to frontline information about available work-life policies and the effective implementation of those policies

(Laharnar et al., 2013). It follows that employees with supportive managers will experience more positive perceptions of work-life balance in relation to the total number of work-life benefits.

Hypothesis 7: Higher levels of perceived manager support will strengthen the relationship between total work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance.

A sample of 100 companies was randomly selected from company lists accessed via ReferenceUSA based on primary NAICS codes for each of the three industries. These companies were checked for a company profile on Indeed.com to create a complete sample of 300 companies. Employee perceptions of work-life balance for each company served as the primary dependent variable and were collected from the Indeed.com reviews, operationalized as work-life balance ratings posted by past and current employees. Work-life benefits, the primary independent variable, were collected from the relevant pages of each corporate website (e.g., diversity & inclusion, human resources, and corporate social responsibility reports) and coded using NVivo software as part of a quantitative content analysis to identify the number and types of work-life benefits that are publicized. Specifically, the independent variable, work-life benefits on corporate websites, served a CSR role that potentially predicts the business-oriented dependent variable, employee perceptions of work-life balance. Company work-life benefits were coded using a priori codes into the eight benefit categories identified and summed by tier and across all three tiers. Company size, as the number of employees, and financial performance, as indicated by annual sales, served as control variables.

A model-building linear regression analysis was run to answer the two research questions and test the seven hypotheses. By breaking down the work-life benefits into business-oriented versus CSR-focused categories across three tiers, the analysis revealed which type of benefit has a greater impact on employee perceptions. Group comparisons across industries allowed meaningful conclusions to be drawn about how CSR influences business outcomes in specific industry contexts. Both statistical and practical significance are reported and discussed.

This study makes three key contributions to the work-life literature with important implications for organizational leaders who are interested in implementing change efforts aimed at bolstering business performance and supporting inclusion and diversity along with practicing and demonstrating corporate responsibility. First, the study integrates the business case with the social responsibility case at the organizational level by exploring the relationship between work-life benefits as CSR with the business-related outcome of employee perceptions. Second, the analysis examines the strength of business- or CSR-focused benefits across three tiers for predicting employee perceptions of work-life balance. Third, the analysis compares the wholesale and retail trade, financial activities, and leisure and hospitality industries to discover how industry norms and general characteristics may influence the relationship between corporate policies and employee perceptions. Together, these contributions move the work-life conversation in the U.S. toward a robust integration of business and socially responsible benefits that have the potential to enhance work-life balance experiences for the individuals that make up today's diverse workforce.

For organizational leaders, particularly in the low-regulation environment in the U.S. (e.g., FMLA) where the bulk of the work-life policy-making is left to company decision-makers, the implications of this study address three critical facets of work-life balance at the organizational level: 1) work-life benefit policy-making considerations, 2) practical factors for improving employee work-life balance, and 3) emerging perspectives regarding what constitutes a compelling argument for instituting progressive work-life benefits. Recognizing the potential impact of both business-related and CSR-oriented benefits on business outcomes may create a significant shift in the number and types of work-life benefits corporate executives consider worthwhile.

Practically speaking, creating the right combination of benefits to serve employee needs and expectations is key to supporting healthy work-life balance in the workforce. For work-life policies to have the maximum impact, leaders must implement effective policies in conjunction with cultivating a positive organizational culture and garnering the support of front-line managers so employees are empowered to use those policies in pursuit of a satisfying work-life balance. According to Bass and Bass (2008), leaders can act as change agents within the organization by setting new norms and influencing the organizational culture. When company executives advocate for and implement robust work-life policies, it signals a shift in corporate values while infusing the culture with new meaning about how work and life intersect (Den Hartog & Dickson, 2012). While many leaders in corporate America have recognized the need for change and started instituting progressive work-life policies in their organizations, many companies still lag behind. Finally, building toward an integrated business and social responsibility case

expands leadership perspectives on the overall value of work-life benefits for creating a sustainable and strategic competitive advantage in their companies.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Work-Life in the United States

Modern work-life issues in the United States grew out of two pivotal shifts in the workforce. First, the move from a largely agrarian society to the predominance of factory work in the U.S. ushered in by the Industrial Revolution of the 1800s created a clear division of labor between paid work and home duties (Brough et al., 2008). As labor between work and home became more divided it also became increasingly gendered with men taking the role of paid employee and women filling domestic roles within the home and family. As worker's welfare concerns came to the forefront of the social conversation in the late 1800s, policies against worker exploitation were put in place, such as laws against child labor and defining the standard as an eight-hour workday. In some cases, organizations began to regulate aspects of employee work and life through sponsored programs or mandatory checks. For example, the Ford Motor Company instituted policies to ensure children of employees attended school and family housing met company-mandated standards of living (Ferber et al., 1991).

Second, the influx of women in the workforce during the Second World War imposed a shift in the post-war economy as many of the women wanted to remain in paid work positions. This created new opportunities to redefine gender roles and meet the needs of workers who managed paid work and family responsibilities, primarily women (Baron et al., 1986; Wosk, 2001). The early designation of *work-family* issues reflects the way the original framing focused on alleviating conflict between work and parenting

responsibilities. Several terms have been used to capture the interaction between work and life spheres including *work-life balance*, *integration*, *enrichment*, *harmony*, and even *conflict* (Bulger & Fisher, 2012). Perhaps the most common phrase is *work-life balance*, evoking a metaphor of two domains co-existing in equilibrium. Work-life balance is defined as “the extent to which an individual is equally engaged in – and equally satisfied with – his or her work role and family role” (Greenhaus et al., 2003, p. 513). Although this description highlights the interplay between work and *family* roles, rather than the more inclusive term *work-life*, it reflects the fact that modern concepts of work-life intersections are an outgrowth of earlier efforts to manage work and family responsibilities.

Naming Work-Life Concepts

As organizations continue to embrace a more inclusive approach, the phrase *work-life intersections* may better reflect the myriad ways in which diverse employees experience the interplay between work and life activities. Based on the definition of work-life balance offered by Greenhaus et al. (2003), “engagement” and “satisfaction” are the essential elements of the work-life experience (p. 513). The phrase *work-life intersections* offers a neutral perspective of the interplay between work and life without suggesting that these intersections be configured in specific ways in order to engage meaningfully and achieve satisfaction. Previously proposed work-life phrases like the ones listed above (e.g., *work-life balance*, *integration*, *enrichment*, *harmony*, *conflict*) tend toward a prescriptive view of work-life that fails to acknowledge the range of personal situations and styles that impact employee experiences.

Specifically, workers in different career stages inhabit various work and life roles and manage diverse responsibilities, suggesting that the way they engage in and find satisfaction in work and life changes over time (Darcy et al., 2012). For instance, the work-life intersections of an early career professional may look less like a 50/50 *balance* and more like an intentionally high investment in career activities. However, this does not mean that the employee is necessarily more or less satisfied with his or her work-life experiences than the mid-career professional with young children who intentionally moderates work activities in favor of being more present with the family. The work-life activities of individual employees are often configured differently during each career stage and life situation, inviting a work-life perspective that acknowledges that employee goals and needs differ and therefore must be met in unique ways (Darcy et al., 2012).

Further, research suggests that individual preferences for work-life styles vary in the way workers manage boundaries between activities (Ezzedeen & Zikic, 2015; Michel & Clark, 2011). Some individuals prefer greater *integration*, with fluid movement between work and life roles and responsibilities. In the integration style, boundaries between work and life activities are flexible and the spheres are more likely to overlap in intentional ways. In contrast, other individuals prefer greater *segmentation* between work and life, creating clear and fixed boundaries between the spheres. Segmentation is characterized by defined periods of work, a dedicated work space, and little to no spillover between work and life responsibilities. Both integration and segmentation approaches have merit and depend largely on the person's job constraints (e.g., shift work, remote work, etc.) and preferred style of moving between work and life spheres.

Adopting the more inclusive phrase *work-life intersections* can help organizational leaders reframe the conversation around work-life policies and practices by creating new cultural meanings (Den Hartog & Dickson, 2012) and empowering employees to engage in work and life activities in ways that are uniquely suited to their stage and style in order to experience satisfaction (Reindl et al., 2011). Taking this broader view of work-life concepts may also help executives make the case to expand available work-life benefits to create a stronger person-environment fit between diverse employees and the organization (Reindl et al., 2011). When organizations recognize the limitations of a prescriptive approach to supporting positive work-life experiences, they can enact a range of work-life policies that give employees maximum latitude in arranging the ways in which their unique work and life activities intersect.

Although the inclusive phrase *work-life intersections* offers important advantages for reframing the work-life conversation for individuals and organizations alike, the widely recognized term, and the term used for the work-life dimension of the Indeed.com ratings, is *work-life balance*. Therefore, *work-life balance* will be used for the remainder of this discussion to represent the range of ways in which work and life domains overlap, intersect, and interact with one another. Despite shortcomings in the metaphor of balance, the sheer popularity of the term makes it a practical choice for this project. For the purposes of this study, when organizations implement work-life policies they are aimed at assisting employees in participating in work and life roles in satisfying ways. While work and life activities and responsibilities do not necessarily receive equal time or equal significance, as the notion of balance suggests, the phrase *work-life balance* does capture

the inherent tension and dynamic nature of adjusting work and life activities to stay meaningfully engaged within both domains.

Contemporary Work-Life Issues

While the work-family concept from which work-life balance evolved was eventually expanded to encompass various aspects of life, including family, leisure, and community involvement, it retains a gender bias in both the types of work-life policies that are instituted at the organizational level (e.g., maternity leave; Addati et al., 2014; Budig, Misra, & Boeckmann, 2012; Moss & Deven, 2006) and the range of employees' work-life experiences (e.g., men and women experience work-life conflict differently; DeMartino & Barbato, 2003; Griep et al., 2016; Radcliffe & Cassell, 2015; Rothbard, 2001).

Current work-life issues and initiatives continue to center on two main themes: worker welfare and gendered access to paid work. Emphasizing worker welfare, organizations often classify work-life policies within broader employee well-being initiatives including health and safety. Gendered access to paid work is evidenced by initiatives that enable mothers to remain in the workforce, such as paid time off policies for the birth of a child. Parental leave policies are typically defined along gender lines, with mothers receiving more leave than fathers in many American organizations (Department of Labor Policy Brief, n.d.). Gendered differences in work-life policies (like maternity leave instead of the more inclusive parental leave) demonstrate the strong bias toward male/female gender roles, even in the modern workplace, and perpetuate disparities between how work-life conflicts are experienced for men and women (Moss & Deven, 2006; see also Saxonberg & Sirovatka, 2006).

Despite the continued gender bias in work-life policies to date, many organizational leaders are moving toward more inclusive approaches to work-life policies and practices. An emphasis on inclusivity in work-life initiatives is helping organizations navigate an ongoing shift toward an increasingly diverse workforce (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2013). Diversity among employees takes many forms that affect work-life issues. For example, religious differences may impact holidays that employees observe and their preferred days of worship. Organizational leaders who recognize that work-life considerations go beyond employees with children are better able to design and implement inclusive policies that meet the needs of a diverse workforce. According to Burns (1978), transformational leaders have a responsibility to elevate and empower their followers by envisioning solutions to social or organizational problems, which can include removing organizational impediments for diverse employees to experience a satisfying work-life balance. As diverse employees continue to navigate work and life activities within the boundaries of organizational policies and practices, company leaders have a real opportunity to create meaningful organizational change by reframing work-life issues and creating a shift in the organizational culture to normalize healthy and inclusive forms of work-life balance (Bass & Bass, 2008; Kotter, 1995).

Like other labor issues involving worker welfare and equal access, work-life initiatives are shaped by governmental legislation, individual decision-making, and organizational policies and practices. In the U.S., federal legislation governing work-life policies is limited to the Family and Medical Leave Act which allows an employee to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for a new baby or ill family member. At the individual level, workers are free to opt out of the workforce or seek alternative work

options like part-time or seasonal work. In fact, both scholars and organizations have placed the primary locus of control over work-life on the individual (Hoffman & Cowan, 2008). Yet, individual employees must attempt to resolve the work-life conflicts they experience within the constraints of organizational policy and practice. In the U.S., organizational leaders have generally adopted a very paternalistic approach to work-life balance by instituting policies deemed best for employees and requiring employees to follow the organization's practices (Nieto, 2003). A study by Hoffman and Cowan (2008) examined company websites from Fortune's "100 Best Companies to Work for" list for 2004 to discover how organizations frame work-life initiatives. Through a cluster analysis of key terms, four themes emerged that reflect prominent corporate ideologies: 1) work takes precedence over other aspects of life, 2) family is the principal concern outside of work, 3) responsibility for navigating work and life lies with the individual employee, and 4) organizational policies determine how employees navigate work and life. Based on these findings, the authors argued that work-life initiatives are a form of organizational control that keeps work as the central focus for employees, limiting life to the periphery.

Despite the common conception that navigating work-life roles is incumbent on the individual, power over employees' work-life practices is largely concentrated in the organization. Individual employees' decisions or preferences for managing their work and life responsibilities are significantly constrained by organizational policies and practices. According to James (2017), "...less attention has been paid within inclusive growth debates to employers as institutions that differently govern the work-lives and well-being of workers and their families" (p. 11). Therefore, it is crucial to examine the

role of organizations and the leaders who guide them as principal influencers in work-life enactment. Transformational leaders influence their employees and the organizational culture through advocacy, decision-making, and modeling healthy work-life behaviors (Givens, 2008). In this way, savvy organizational leaders have an opportunity to create and communicate (e.g., via public facing websites) a new vision for how work and life can interact in positive ways as part of organizational change efforts (Burns, 1978; Kotter, 1995). However, casting the vision is not enough. Company leaders must take action to rewire the systems and structures of the organization by instituting new policies that fit the renewed vision. As Harris (2013) explained, “Planned change involves the creation of a new environment in which people function, hopefully, more effectively” (p. 178). Work-life policies that are not sufficiently communicated or enacted are unlikely to impact employees across the organization in tangible ways that result in higher positive perceptions of work-life balance.

Leaders can promote a progressive vision for work-life policies and practices but they must continue to lead the change until the new behaviors (such as fathers taking parental leave) are firmly embedded in the organization’s culture (Schein, 1990). Work-life policies that are put into practice and normalized within the organization as *the way things are done* create a positive work-life culture. As Harris (2013) explained, “The organization’s culture can promote harmonious team relations, or overwork and overstretch its people” (p. 113). The goal of organizational change efforts for work-life initiatives is ultimately to institutionalize the enhanced vision of diverse employees who are actively engaged in meaningful work and life activities (Kotter, 1995). Corporate leaders in the U.S. are in the unique position to lead the change in how their organizations

and the broader society think about and engage in work and life spheres. With growing public interest in employee well-being and work-life balance, the U.S. context is ripe for exploring the potential relationship between publicized organizational work-life policies and employee perceptions of work-life balance. In short, organizational leaders need to know whether the work-life initiatives they are implement and publicize are in fact creating higher levels of employee satisfaction with work-life balance experiences.

Dual Perspectives on Work-Life Policies at the Organizational Level: The Business Case and the Social Responsibility Case

At the organizational level, two key arguments undergird the implementation of work-life initiatives: the business case and the social responsibility case. These arguments flow from “twin policy ideals of economic prosperity and social inclusion” that are generally considered mutually exclusive aims (James, 2017, p. 10). In the U.S. and internationally, attending to work-life issues as part of an overarching Quality of Work Life theme has become a global “imperative” and a measure of the overall well-being of national citizens (Reilly, 2012, p. 5). For example, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) includes Work-life Balance as one of 11 indicators on its Better Life Index. While the United States scored a perfect 10 on the Income dimension of the Better Life Index, it lags far behind other developed nations with a score of 5.8 (out of 10) on Work-life Balance. Americans consistently work long hours and spend less time on personal care and leisure activities (OECD). The U.S. ranks 30th on Work-life Balance out of the 38 countries represented on the Better Life Index with the Netherlands taking first place with a score of 9.3 (OECD.org).

According to Been et al. (2017), national biases exist in the way managers understand and advocate for work-life initiatives. Specifically, semi-structured interviews with 78 top managers across five European countries, including the United Kingdom, revealed a preference for business case arguments among Anglo-Saxon participants. While managers from the U.S. were not included in this study, it is reasonable to extend the Anglo-Saxon perspective as the dominant viewpoint in U.S.-based corporate leaders (Been et al., 2017). The national and international context for addressing work-life issues demonstrates the need for organizational leaders in the U.S. to take work-life balance initiatives seriously. In the public sphere, a company's internal work-life policies affect its external reputation with prospective employees and influence relationships with investors and consumers. At the employee level, the presence or absence of robust work-life benefits impacts the attraction (Colley, 2010; Morris, 2008) and retention (Morris et al., 2009) of high quality employees. Morris et al. (2011) identified an organization's work-life initiatives as part of its public image from an employee-facing perspective, yet work-life initiatives play a role in broader organizational outcomes as well.

In the U.S., the most prevalent argument used by leaders to advocate for work-life initiatives at the organizational level is the *business case*; however, the *social responsibility* argument is gaining a foothold as well. In fact, James (2017) argues that "social inequity is simply bad for economic growth" (p. 10). Work-life research, then, can benefit from taking a complementary perspective of initiatives and outcomes, while "reconciling potential tensions between economic growth and social equity" (James, p. 11). Despite U.S. leaders' preference for the business case, work-life scholars are calling for the development of a strong social responsibility case in addition to the business case

(Kossek, 2016; Kossek et al., 2010; Ollier-Malaterre, 2011). The current study uses both the business case and social responsibility arguments as a framework for examining the impact of progressive work-life policies on employee perceptions of work-life balance.

The Business Case

The majority of research at the organizational level for companies in the U.S. builds on the business case by exploring factors related to bottom line profit such as turnover, job satisfaction, burnout, absenteeism, organizational commitment, employee engagement, and productivity. According to Kumar and Chakraborty (2013), “In the current economic environment, work-life balance is now regarded as one of the most important workplace qualities, second only to pay package” (p. 62). Leaders often approach human capital as part of an overall business strategy, offering a range of employee benefits, including work-life benefits, in hopes of creating a sustainable competitive advantage by attracting and retaining top talent (Thomas et al., 2013).

The ultimate loss of productivity occurs if the employee leaves the organization. The cost of turnover, including lost work from the time of exit and the length of the hiring and training process for a new employee, is a bottom line metric that organizations use to track human resource return on investments. Most human resource initiatives, including work-life balance benefits, are tied to the profit and loss associated with the attraction and retention of talented employees (Fitz-enz, 2000). Measuring the return on investment for human resource initiatives, including work-life balance policies and practices, is an organizational imperative for leaders in the current knowledge economy (Fitz-enz, 2000). Bardoel and De Cieri (2014) explained, “Recently there has been growing attention paid by practitioners to the need for effective measurement of the

contribution of work-life initiatives to both financial and nonfinancial performance objectives and to organizational effectiveness overall” (p. 635). Some metrics focus on the cost of failing to provide work-life benefits, such as high costs associated with absenteeism and turnover that can potentially be reduced by offering employees a way to manage work and life roles effectively (Dex & Bond, 2005). Other metrics highlight the potential for work-life initiatives to improve financial performance (Nayak & Sahoo, 2015).

The business case rationale is reflected in previous research that examines the relationships between work-life benefits and a variety of organizational outcomes (Beauregard & Henry, 2009). At the forefront of work-life research are studies focusing on how specific work-life policies, such as flex-time (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018), improve the *attraction and retention* of talented employees (Catano & Morrow Hines, 2016; Eversole et al., 2012; Friedman & Westring, 2015). Alongside attraction and retention are a host of other organizational variables that influence an employee’s decision to join or exit a company as well as the quality of work an employee produces during his or her tenure at the organization. Dependent variables within work-life research at the organizational level include *turnover* (Dex & Bond, 2005; Ropponen et al., 2016; Surienty et al., 2014; Webber et al., 2010), *organizational commitment* (Nayak & Sahoo, 2015; Smith & Gardner, 2007; Webber et al., 2010), *employee engagement* (Kaliannan et al., 2016; Rao, 2017; Shankar & Bhatnagar, 2010), *burnout/stress* (Boamah & Laschinger, 2016; Hobson et al., 2001; Karpinar, et al., 2016; Michel et al., 2014; Morris et al., 2011; Schwartz et al., 2018; Westercamp et al., 2018), *absenteeism* (Grawitch et al., 2006; Ropponen et al., 2016), *job satisfaction* (Chen et al., 2015; Dorenkamp &

Ruhle, 2019; Haar et al., 2014; Kaliannan et al., 2016; Ropponen et al., 2016), and ultimately, *productivity* and *performance* (Abdirahman et al., 2018; de Sivatte et al., 2015; Nayak & Sahoo, 2015; Salimi & Saeidian, 2015; Hobson et al., 2001).

Business Case-oriented Work-life Policies

Work-life policies that rely largely on the business case rationale and return on investment are outlined in Lobel and Kossek's (1996) practical framework for categorizing human resource programs. They identified five main categories in their work-life policy framework: 1) time-based (e.g., flexibility, leave policies), 2) financial-based (e.g., insurance, monetary incentives), 3) information-based (e.g., training, workshops), 4) job-design-based (e.g., job sharing, virtual work), and 5) direct service-based (e.g., onsite childcare). These five categories, briefly described below, represent traditional, business case conceptualizations of work-life policies and employee benefits.

Time-based Policies. Perhaps the most closely associated with work-life initiatives, time-based policies include parental leave, paid time off, holiday pay, part-time or compressed work weeks, and flexible work schedules. These policies are aimed at providing employees with the time away from work needed to manage family responsibilities as well as enjoy rest and recreation.

Financial-based Policies. Financial rewards and benefits are a mainstay for organizations that are interested in providing for the needs of their employees. These policies include health, disability, and life insurance, competitive salaries, adoption assistance, corporate discounts, and tuition reimbursement. Even wellness programs that carry monetary incentives are part of financial-based policies.

Information-based Policies. Many companies offer a range of informational resources from professional development training to mentoring to workshops on financial planning, fitness, or other topics. Programs that provide opportunities for learning without financial incentives fall within the purview of information-based policies.

Job-design-based Policies. With the rise of communication and work technologies, more jobs are being designed in ways that allow workers to participate remotely or with non-traditional schedules. Job sharing is another example of a job-design offering that facilitates diverse work-life situations.

Direct-service-based Policies. On-site services such as a health clinic, daycare, meal preparation, or fitness center are a few of the direct-services organizations may provide employees to enhance their work-life experiences. Making these services readily available and convenient for employees can reduce time away from work.

The benefits that fall into these five categories have been accepted as time-tested strategies for providing for the financial needs of employees and empowering employees to manage their work-life needs with a range of leave options, workplace workshops and resources, and more. While many of the policies in these categories are still considered progressive, such as on-site daycare or meal preparation, others have been adopted as standard full-time employee benefits such as health insurance and paid time off.

The Social Responsibility Case

While the business case argument emphasizes the financial impact of work-life initiatives for the organization, Kossek (2016) argues that a *triple bottom line* approach to measuring the influence of work-life benefits highlights the value for organizations, workers, and society at large. The business case alone is insufficient to address the triple

bottom line. As Ollier-Malaterre (2011) argued, “In short, work-life research needs to build a ‘citizenship argument’ on top of the business case argument” (p. 418). To understand the value of work-life benefits for employers, employees, and society, the social responsibility case must be added to the business case as organizations adopt a sustainable human resource management approach (Lis, 2012).

The social responsibility case for work-life initiatives hinges on an ethical justification for implementing work-life policies and practices because it is the *right thing to do*. Taking an organizational leadership perspective, the benefits of offering robust work-life initiatives extend beyond simply keeping employees happy. A recent study by James (2017) indicates that work-life offerings impact positive organizational outcomes by enhancing learning, creativity, and innovation. These aspects have the potential to increase a company’s triple bottom line by decreasing personnel costs (e.g., turnover and absenteeism) while establishing the organization as an ethical and responsible corporate citizen (Gotsis & Kortezi, 2013). This is the point at which the business case blurs the line into the social responsibility case for work-life policies. Company leaders can demonstrate good and ethical business practices to internal and external constituents by tracking and reporting corporate social responsibility efforts.

Corporate social responsibility, as a function of “corporate brand and reputation” (Ravasi & van Rekom, 2003, p. 123), is just one aspect of corporate identity that may be illustrated through public presentations of work-life initiatives. Research in this area begins to demonstrate how an emphasis on cultivating a favorable corporate reputation can create value for the organization. For example, Balan (2016) explained the way companies may build enhanced corporate identities to emerge as a market leader. In this

sense, company leaders that are intentional about cultivating and presenting the corporate identity (e.g., brand, reputation, etc.) to internal and external audiences can create a competitive advantage if facets of the identity resonate with the target audiences. Organizational leaders can enhance the corporate reputation with public audiences by creating socially responsible policies and practices, including safety protocols and community involvement through volunteering, may make the company more desirable to prospective employees (Lin & Chen, 2015; Zhang & Gowan, 2012).

Work-life balance policies serve as a dimension of corporate social responsibility (CSR) with the potential to enhance the company's reputation with its current and prospective employees (Flammer & Luo, 2017; Gilani & Jamshed, 2016; Kossek & Groggins, 2014; Stella et al., 2014) and with external constituents, namely consumers (Costa & Menichini, 2013; Mohr et al., 2001; Öberseder et al., 2013) and investors (Arthur, 2003). Communicating CSR efforts to public audiences enhances an organization's reputation with stakeholders, and each type of CSR initiative (e.g., environmental, work-life balance, safety, philanthropic) impacts the company's reputation to different degrees (Yu et al., 2017). In this sense, company leaders that practice and publicize engaged CSR initiatives, including work-life balance, are likely to realize tangible business outcomes such as a competitive advantage based on enhanced brand reputation.

From the current and prospective employee perspectives, good employees want to work for good companies, and CSR is a primary method companies use to develop their corporate image and reputation, boosting their ability to recruit and retain top talent (Gilani & Jamshed, 2016; Lin & Chen, 2015). Morris et al. (2011) identified work-life

initiatives as one facet of creating a desirable corporate reputation, specifically as a recruiting tool to attract talented employees. According to Duarte et al. (2017), "...in the war for talent, organizations can use information about their corporate social performance and ethical reputation to attract potential candidates, alongside more traditional information on organizational attributes and job characteristics" (p. 192). For example, companies that offer work-life benefits (Bourhis & Mekkaoui, 2010) and demonstrate social-environmental responsibility (Cohen et al., 2016) are perceived as more attractive to prospective employees. Prospective employees are also likely to use CSR information to assess person-organization fit by deciding whether corporate ethics and values align with the individual's own ethical predisposition (Zhang & Gowan, 2008; Zhang & Gowan, 2012). CSR efforts aimed at current employees often focus on safeguarding employee well-being (e.g., safety, health, and work-life initiatives), which can simultaneously raise employee engagement while diminishing problematic behaviors like absenteeism (Flammer & Luo, 2017). Similarly, an analysis of 2,081 employee surveys from an international pharmaceutical company found that internal CSR is positively related to organizational commitment (Mory et al., 2016). The impact of an organization's CSR efforts to demonstrate ethical human resource management extend beyond current and prospective employees.

American consumers are increasingly using their buying power to support or censure companies based on perceptions of the organization's political or ethical decisions (Copeland, 2014). For example, corporate leaders that demonstrate socially and environmentally responsible operations (Wong & Dhanesh, 2017) and treat employees fairly (Mohr et al., 2001) are building a corporate reputation that resonates with the

broader consumer base. Fallout from corporate scandals like Enron have incensed public opinion and brought greater awareness to the social impact of organizational ethics.

Certifications such as the *Fair Trade* and *Family Friendly* designations are designed to help consumers identify companies that align with their ethical ideals (Nicholls & Opal, 2005; Stropnik, 2010). Similarly, community involvement, through corporate philanthropy and volunteerism, can improve public perceptions of the company, resulting in higher brand loyalty among consumers when these efforts are communicated clearly and with an emphasis on community service rather than profit (Plewa et al., 2015).

Finally, external CSR impacts investor relations and perceived corporate value. Organizations can experience a tangible increase in perceived value by investors when work-life policies are announced, according to a study by Arthur (2003). The research examined 130 work-life initiative announcements from the *Wall Street Journal* and demonstrated a relationship between work-life policy announcements and increased stock prices immediately following the public notice. This finding suggests that work-life initiatives influence public perceptions of an organization's ethical treatment of employees, giving the company a boost in public opinion and perceived economic value.

CSR-oriented Work-life Policies

In addition to the five work-life policy categories identified by Lobel and Kossek (1996), three emerging categories exist in the work-life literature that specifically reflect the increasing emphasis on corporate social responsibility. These three categories are: 1) a supportive organizational culture, 2) safety and wellness initiatives, and 3) corporate-sponsored volunteerism. As leaders seek ways to create thriving work environments with high levels of employee engagement that contribute to a sustainable competitive

advantage, they are designing robust benefits packages intended to meet the needs of a diverse workforce while demonstrating their commitment to socially responsible policies and practices. For example, a supportive organizational culture and a commitment to safety and well-being along with corporate-sponsored volunteerism serve as work-life initiatives that support the goals of the organization and the employee.

Supportive Organizational Culture. Organizational culture defines how things get done around here and encompasses everything from attitudes about safety and work-life balance to learning and innovation. Leaders/managers and employees operate within the constraints and norms of the broader organizational culture (Schein, 2004). If a healthy work-life balance is normalized and celebrated, employees are more likely to take advantage of the work-life benefits the company offers. A supportive organizational culture, as evidenced by support from managers for work-life needs (Wayne & Casper, 2016), is critical to meeting the work-life needs of diverse employees and ensuring work-life policies are put into practice (Nitzsche et al., 2014). Companies often use CSR to assert their commitment to a supportive culture in statements about how their culture affirms the well-being and/or work-life integration of employees.

According to Wayne and Casper (2016), a supportive work-life culture was particularly important for female job-seekers in selecting attractive organizations. In fact, the work-life culture was rated higher in importance than work-life policies, demonstrating that organizations must create supportive work-life cultures in addition to policy development. In a study of work-life balance in STEM academic work, the researchers asserted that women in STEM fields are systematically disadvantaged by an industry-wide culture that prizes work over family (Feeney et al., 2014). Therefore, in

pursuit of career success, employees may choose not to use the work-life policies in place. If the official organizational policy contradicts the cultural norms of *how we do things around here*, policy will be unsuccessful at effecting real change. Feeney et al. (2014) explained, "...it follows that when formal policies are created to accommodate alternative work arrangements or work-family balance, there will not be a culture or norm of utilizing those policies and services" (p. 752). Expectations for work habits and work-life roles are so deeply embedded in organizational and national cultures that change is often slow and certainly requires more than writing and authorizing new policy. Organizational leaders must intentionally implement practical strategies to cultivate a supportive work-life culture within the organizational context (Koppes, 2008).

Safety & Wellness Initiatives. Stakeholders want to know that a company is engaging in safe and sustainable practices, for their workers, for their communities, and for the environment. Safety initiatives, within the broader work-life framework, are an employee-centered investment that organizations make in their workforce (Flammer & Luo, 2017). Effective safety protocols reduce lost time at work and ensure employees return home to their families. Health and wellness initiatives reduce sick time and ensure a vibrant workforce. While research suggests that creating safety policies and protocols does not ensure they will be practiced (Zohar, 2002), it is an important step toward making safety a priority and part of the organizational culture. Research indicates that higher levels of work-life integration are associated with enhanced teamwork and a positive safety climate (Schwartz et al., 2018). Companies that support employee safety and learning as part of their corporate culture create an environment where employees can bring new knowledge, creativity, and vitality to their work projects (Ramos et al.,

2015). Safety and wellness measures range from emergency medical training and on-site medical devices to protocols for reducing exposure to hazardous materials and using ergonomic equipment and office furniture. Publicizing the company's plan and record for keeping people and places safe also serves a CSR role by demonstrating the company's concern for its employees and communities.

Volunteerism. Corporate volunteerism initiatives serve several organizational goals. For example, volunteer activities can often double as professional development opportunities. Leadership development requires exposure to critical developmental experiences at appropriate times in the leadership trajectory (Mumford et al., 2000) and volunteer experiences can provide opportunities for employees to participate in developmental experiences in hands-on and meaningful ways (Bartsch, 2012; Gray, 2010). In this sense, volunteerism as a work-life initiative promotes ongoing learning and socially inclusive growth at the organizational level (James, 2017). For employees, corporate volunteerism can also enhance the company's image, leading to greater job satisfaction and by extension, lower turnover intentions (Ruizalba Robledo et al., 2015). Volunteerism also offers notable benefits for employee well-being. For example, Mojza and Sonnentag (2010) conducted a diary study in conjunction with hierarchical linear modeling to determine whether employees who participated in a volunteer activity experienced less job stress on the following day. The results demonstrated the value of volunteering as a strategy for helping employees cope with job-related stressors. Another study found that volunteering is a viable strategy for enhancing overall well-being, which benefits the employee at work and in life (Mojza et al., 2011). Employees may also participate in corporate volunteering initiatives as a strategy for bridging the gap between

work and life activities (Chalofsky, 2008). Many companies offer a specified number of paid hours allotted for volunteering with the organization of the employee's choice while other companies have corporate volunteering events open to employee participation. Community involvement efforts offer a meaningful way of demonstrating CSR while benefiting the individual and organization in tangible ways.

Work-life Benefit Bundles

The work-life policies in each of the eight categories identified above (time-based, financial, informational, job design, direct service, supportive organizational culture, safety and wellness, and volunteerism) are typically offered in conjunction with two or more additional policies to create a complementary bundle of work-life benefits (Morris et al., 2011). The current study recognizes the likelihood that companies will advertise a range of benefits that reflect both business case and CSR case rationales. Therefore, the eight categories are assigned to three separate tiers. The original five categories outlined by Lobel and Kossek (1996) (categories 1-5) primarily represent business case benefits. The emerging categories added to the framework (categories 6-8) create a favorable CSR focus. The three distinct tiers capture the degree to which companies rely on business case versus corporate social responsibility case benefits. Tier 1 benefits represent a *foundational business case* with only the most basic benefits included. Companies may offer Tier 1 benefits to fulfill legal and industry regulations. Benefits at Tier 2 represent popular policies that are likely to make the company more competitive in the workforce marketplace yet still rely heavily on a *modern business case*. Finally, the emerging work-life benefits that display a commitment to corporate

social responsibility make up the *progressive CSR case* benefits at Tier 3. The category framework is outlined in Table 1.

Robust work-life benefits packages can foster higher levels of engagement and innovation among current employees and improve the company's reputation and appeal with its customers, investors, and prospective employees. From a business case perspective, Perry-Smith and Blum's (2000) research showed that bundling a variety of work-life benefits together resulted in greater financial rewards for the organization than offering single or similar groupings of work-life benefits. In another study, managers from organizations with robust work-life benefit bundles believed in the positive value of work-life policies and noted improving job satisfaction (a business case goal) and enhancing the company's public image (a CSR goal) as the two most significant points of strategic impact (Morris et al., 2011). For socially conscious organizational leaders, offering a range of work-life benefits allows them to support the work-life needs of diverse employees and demonstrate ethical care for worker well-being. For example, when corporate mission statements emphasize the value of their employees, companies are more likely to offer robust work-life policies (Blair-Loy et al., 2011). Taken together, this literature suggests that organizational leaders who support robust bundles of work-life policies and practices are more likely to affirm the value of these benefits from both a business case and CSR perspective.

Companies that put greater emphasis on their work-life benefits by communicating them on their public-facing corporate websites serve both the primary aims of the business case and CSR case. Specifically, the business case goal is to attract and retain top talent by showcasing robust work-life benefits on the company website

while a key CSR function is highlighting the company's dedication to being a responsible and caring employer. CSR messages, particularly those related to work-life balance benefits and health and safety policies, may serve to motivate and engage current employees, according to a study by Flammer and Luo (2017). Companies often use their corporate websites to share CSR efforts as part of an overall strategy to construct their corporate identity and enhance their brand reputation (Bravo et al., 2012). Therefore, company website information about work-life benefits, the independent variable in this study, is likely to be crafted to emphasize both business case and CSR case goals.

Like data from other public Internet platforms (e.g., Facebook, see Kim et al., 2014), data from corporate websites allows researchers to examine corporate messages and public interaction with the company's brand. Corporate website content has been used in previous research to study a range of organizational topics (e.g., the previously mentioned study by Blair-Loy et al., 2011). For example, Hoffman and Cowan (2008) analyzed website content from Fortune's 2004 list of *100 Best Companies to Work for* to uncover how these companies construct a corporate ideology of work-life concepts. Similarly, corporate website content was used in a comparative analysis of CSR themes for companies in U.S. and China (Tang et al., 2015). Overall, corporate website content offers a publicly accessible and rich data source related to organizational life, including work-life balance, informing key stakeholders about the company's values, operations, and brand identity. The question that remains to be answered is whether companies with greater public emphasis on work-life benefits enjoy enhanced employee perceptions of the organization's work-life balance.

Perceptions of Work-Life Balance

Work-life balance is inherently tied to “an individual’s perceptions of their allocation of time, involvement, and satisfaction across different work and nonwork roles” (Kossek & Groggins, 2014, p. 1). Experiencing a satisfying work-life balance is influenced by how closely work-life balance policies and practices match employee expectations (Bansal & Agarwal, 2017) and the perceived importance of work-life balance to the individual employee (Pookaiyaudom, 2015). Ryan and Kossek (2008) identified four avenues for implementing work-life policies that shape employee perceptions: 1) supervisor support, 2) availability, 3) negotiability, and 4) communication. They explained, “These implementation attributes affect whether an adopted policy is perceived to fulfill work-life needs and act to signal the organization’s support for individual differences in work identities and life circumstances” (Ryan & Kossek, 2008, p. 295). Work-life policies that do not take root in practice and those that fail to meet employee needs are unlikely to make a positive impact on employee perceptions of work-life balance, the dependent variable in this study.

The relationship between work-life policy and practice has been studied extensively, often revealing a gap between stated policies at the organizational level and lived experiences at the employee level. The potential gap between policy and practice is well-established in the literature and attributed to critical factors such as *managerial perspectives* (Daverth et al., 2016; Kasper et al., 2005; Kossek & Lambert, 2003; Laharnar et al., 2013; Maxwell, 2005; Mazerolle & Goodman, 2013; Vidal et al., 2012), *organizational culture* (de Sivatte et al., 2015; Koppes, 2008; Rao, 2017; Webber et al., 2010), *employee awareness of benefits* (Kumar & Chakraborty, 2013; Laharnar et al.,

2013; McCarthy et al., 2010; Ollier-Malaterre & Andrade, 2016; Smith & Gardner, 2007), and *employee access to benefits* (Blair-Loy et al., 2011; Ollier-Malaterre & Andrade, 2016; Smith & Gardner, 2007; Webber et al., 2010; Williams et al., 2013).

When organizational policies do not match the lived work-life experiences of employees, the gap impacts how employees perceive work-life balance at the organization.

While the relationship between work-life policy and practice has important implications for shaping employee perceptions of work-life balance, research suggests that when employees experience a positive cultural and managerial support within the organization they are more likely to have favorable perceptions of work-life balance regardless of whether they use the work-life benefits available to them (Webber et al., 2010). In this sense, the organization's emphasis on work-life balance overall may be more instrumental in cultivating positive employee perceptions than the alignment of policy and practice. For example, companies that emphasized the value of their employees in their corporate mission statements were more likely to offer robust work-life policies (Blair-Loy et al., 2011). It follows that corporate leadership that demonstrates greater emphasis on work-life balance by offering and publicizing robust work-life benefits may be signaling organizational support for work-life balance to current and prospective employees, thereby enhancing perceptions. To examine the relationship between publicly communicated work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance, the following overarching research question was posed.

Research question 1: Is there a relationship between the work-life benefits publicized on corporate websites and employee perceptions of work-life balance?

Work-life policies are grounded in business case and social responsibility case rationales that may vary in their influence on employee perceptions of work-life balance. Work-life benefits at Tier 1, like paid time off and health insurance for full-time employees, are commonly accepted as standard business practice while a supportive organizational environment and corporate volunteerism are work-life benefits with a clear CSR focus from Tier 3. In line with previous findings that robust bundles of work-life benefits create better financial and social responsibility outcomes (see Morris et al., 2011; Perry-Smith & Blum, 2000), this study explores the use of work-life policies in different categories to determine whether higher tier policies have a greater impact on employee perceptions.

Hypothesis 1: Companies with a higher number of Tier 2 and Tier 3 benefits will have higher employee perceptions of work-life balance.

Since CSR efforts are specifically aimed at improving company reputation, the expectation is that a higher number of progressive work-life policies from Tier 3 will be positively related to higher employee perceptions than business case policies at Tier 1 and Tier 2.

Hypothesis 2: Companies with a higher number of CSR-related work-life benefits (Tier 3) will have higher employee perceptions of work-life balance.

Moderating Factors

Industry Sector. The industries in which companies are embedded can influence company work-life policies and perceptions in significant ways based on the nature of the work and the norms within the industry. For instance, it is easy to imagine a chemical or construction company may emphasize safety policies more than an insurance or retail

company due to the type of work employees are typically engaged in. Further, institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983; Meyer & Rowan, 1977) suggests that organizations are influenced by external pressures to remain competitive by imitating the work-life policies of other companies within their industry. These industry norms shape leader perspectives and employee expectations about what work-life policies are considered important. For example, research in the STEM field demonstrated a strong precedence for work roles taking priority over life roles, making it difficult for employees in this field to experience a satisfying work-life balance (Feeney et al., 2014). Further, Dizaho et al. (2017) demonstrated that employees in professional roles differ from shift workers in their work-life balance attitudes and expectations. Work-life policies and perceptions are shaped and evaluated according to the constraints and opportunities in each specific industry context (e.g., retail employees are unlikely to have a remote work option like an employee in financial services industry might).

The current study includes companies from three distinct industry categories that are likely to differ in substantial ways: 1) wholesale and retail trade, 2) financial activities, and 3) leisure and hospitality. These three broad industry categories were selected because they represent differences in general industry characteristics that are likely to impact perceptions of work-life balance, namely job status (full- vs. part-time), work schedule (regular daytime hours vs. shift), and workforce diversity (gender and age). The relevant industry demographics for these categories are summarized in Table 2. Dividing companies into three groups according to general industry characteristics allows for meaningful comparisons of how work-life benefits and employee perceptions vary by industry. Therefore, the second research question along with hypotheses 3-5 explore the

potential moderating effects of industry on the relationship between work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance.

Research Question 2: How does the relationship between work-life benefits and employee perceptions vary by industry?

Industry Characteristics

Job Status. Employees filling various job status designations, specifically full-time versus part-time employees, often receive different benefits packages, including access to work-life benefits such as paid time off, which may influence their experiences and therefore their perceptions of work-life balance (Ollier-Malaterre & Andrade, 2016). As Kossek and Lautsch (2018) explained, work-life balance is experienced differently depending on full-time and part-time status as well as responsibility level within the organization (part-time workers often fill lower-level jobs). For instance, the types of work-life benefits offered by an insurance company that employs mainly professional level, full-time individuals are likely to differ from the benefits offered by a retail company that relies predominantly on an entry-level, part-time workforce. Since wholesale and retail trade and financial activities industries employ more full-time workers on average than the leisure and hospitality industry, it is reasonable to expect that companies in these industries will offer higher tier benefits to meet the work-life needs of their employees. Because leisure and hospitality industry employees are more likely to be part-time, shift workers, they are likely to have limited access and lower expectations for robust work-life benefits. That is, a hotel that offers corporate-sponsored volunteer programs for full-time employees, is less likely to see this benefit make a significant difference in its employees' perceptions of work-life balance because the

majority of its employees are part-time, making them ineligible for the benefit. Therefore, companies in the wholesale and retail trade and financial activities industries are likely to have a stronger moderating effect between higher level benefits in Tier 2 and 3 and employee perceptions of work-life balance than their counterparts in the leisure and hospitality industry.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between Tier 2 and 3 work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance will be stronger among companies in the wholesale and retail trade and financial activities industries than leisure and hospitality companies.

Work Schedule. The employee's work schedule (e.g., regular daytime schedule vs. shift work) may also differ based on industry, influencing perceived work-life conflict and the employee's ability to manage work and life roles. Flexibility in work schedule or location is a popular work-life benefit with generally positive results (Cicei, 2015; Jackson & Fransman, 2018; Radcliffe & Cassell, 2015; Ropponen et al., 2016). In an Economic News Release, the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019) reports that 57% of workers enjoy some flexibility in their work schedule. However, some industries (and specific job statuses within those industries) are naturally more conducive to flexible work while others require onsite offices and structured business hours (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018). While 84% of workers have regular daytime hours, 39% of those who work non-daytime hours do so because the job requires it (U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Economic News Release, 2019).

Shift work poses a specific challenge to achieving work-life balance as it is not conducive to flexibility and limits the employee's ability to rearrange work and life

responsibilities to find a satisfying fit (Dizaho et al., 2017). Simply put, shift work typically lowers perceptions of work-life balance while greater flexibility in work schedule improves perceptions of work-life balance. However, not all flexible work scheduling provides the same boon to employee perceptions. According to Avgoutstaki and Bessa (2019), flexible work arrangements that are intended to help employees manage work and life roles more effectively have a greater positive impact on employee perceptions than flexible scheduling that is designed primarily to serve the organization.

Research showed that employees in professional roles differ from shift workers in their work-life balance attitudes and expectations (Dizaho et al., 2017). For example, retail companies rely largely on shift-work that diminishes positive work-life experiences. Because employees of financial activities companies predominantly work regular business hours and include fewer shift workers compared to employees in wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries, they are likely to experience fewer impediments to managing work-life balance and have greater potential for flexibility. In professional roles within the financial activities industry, Tier 2 benefits, including flexible scheduling in the job-design category, are likely to enhance employee perceptions of work-life balance compared to workers in wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries.

Hypothesis 4: The relationship between Tier 2 benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance will be stronger among companies in the financial activities industry than the wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries.

Workforce Diversity. The number and types of work-life policies needed to serve an organization's workforce depends largely on the gender and career stage of the

employees. Gender diversity within an industry influences the emphasis placed on work-life benefits along with attitudes about what benefits are important. For example, within the male-dominated STEM field, family care policies (e.g., parental leave, on-site childcare) are more likely to be neglected because of a lack of precedence and industry norms that promote work over life activities (Feeney et al., 2014). Gender further influences employee perceptions of work-life balance through differences in lived experiences (Doble & Supriya, 2010). While both men and women are likely to experience work-life imbalance, their work-life experiences are often different, with women typically experiencing more work-life conflict (Griep et al., 2016). Further, gender plays a role in how work-life conflicts are resolved, making the available benefits unequally effective in helping men and women achieve work-life balance (Radcliffe & Cassell, 2015). Yerkes et al. (2010) compared work-life policies to the lived experiences of parents, particularly mothers, noting important limitations in the ability of policy to change the way workers realistically manage work-life balance.

Offering robust work-life benefits can be especially important for attracting, retaining, and promoting women. Regardless of career stage, women who perceive a high personal sacrifice as the price of promotion are likely to avoid executive leadership positions (Roebuck et al., 2013). For aspiring women leaders, the presence and practice of work-life policies can make the difference between earning promotions or opting out (Ellinas et al., 2018; Fritz & van Knippenberg, 2018; Harman & Sealy, 2017). In a study of 402 employees, the availability of work-life benefits was positively associated with aspirations to attain leadership positions for both men and women, yet the interaction between gender and work-life benefits showed that women rely on work-life benefits

more than their male counterparts for pursuing career advancement (Fritz & van Knippenberg, 2018).

Men and women in mid-career, in contrast to early- and late-career employees, are more likely to need robust work-life policies to manage work and life roles that often include active caretaking for children and aging parents. A study of medical doctors revealed that those in older generations who had been practicing medicine longer (later career stage) reported more positive perceptions of work-life balance (Kaliannan et al., 2016). This finding suggests that career stage impacts perceptions of work-life balance, specifically mid-career workers are likely to experience lower perceptions of work-life balance than their early- and late-career counterparts.

Workforce diversity characteristics, namely gender and career stage (age), within industries impact attitudes toward work-life policies and what policies are needed to support employees' work and life roles. Leisure and hospitality companies tend to attract a younger workforce, on average, in early stages of the career path who do not yet have heavy family demands while financial activities companies have the highest number of mid-career employees and the highest number of women. Further, financial activities professionals are likely to consider Tier 1 and Tier 2 benefits standard offerings, relying on the more progressive benefits of Tier 3 to enhance perceptions of work-life balance. Because the financial activities industry has a higher number of mid-career and female employees with greater work-life benefit needs and expectations, the effects of more Tier 3 benefits on employee perceptions of work-life balance will be stronger for financial activities companies than for wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality companies.

Hypothesis 5: The relationship between Tier 3 work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance will be stronger among the financial activities industry than the wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries.

Organizational Culture and Manager Support. Organizational culture and perceived manager support for work-life balance is vital to empower employees to learn about work-life benefits available to them and to use those benefits without fear of negative career consequences. For example, employees are less likely to use work-life policies when they believe they may experience negative consequences as a result (e.g., appearing less valuable to the company, losing promotion or pay raise opportunities) (Dick & Hyde, 2006; Moss & Deven, 2006; Smith & Gardner, 2007). Organizational leaders can be especially influential in shaping organizational culture, embedding values, rituals, and behaviors in it that help or hinder healthy work-life balance (Schein, 2000). Further, a leader's impact on employee performance is moderated by the organizational culture within which he or she operates (Ogbonna & Harris, 2000). Similarly, organizational leaders are responsible for making policies regarding work-life benefits, yet the efficacy of these policies is likely affected by whether the culture supports their use.

A supportive organizational culture is an important factor in shaping employee perceptions of work-life balance. Survey data gathered from 292 university employees in Australia revealed that organizational culture influences employee perceptions of potential career consequences to using work-life benefits, acceptable strategies for navigating tensions between workload and time off, and managerial perspectives on granting work-life benefits (Webber et al., 2010). Positive organizational cultures

empower employees to use work-life benefits without fear of censure and promote healthy work-life boundaries. It follows that a positive organizational culture is likely to improve the relationship between total work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance.

Hypothesis 6: A positive organizational culture strengthens the relationship between total work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance.

In addition to organizational culture, perceived manager support is essential when employees consider how to balance work and life roles. Higher quality leader-follower relationships (specifically leader-member exchange) are positively related to greater degrees of work-family facilitation while poor leader-follower relationships tend to interfere with work-life balance (Tummers & Bronkhorst, 2014). When employees perceive that their manager will look unfavorably on the use of work-life benefits (e.g., sign of weakness or poor work commitment), the lack of support often prevents employees from taking advantage of the work-life policies that are officially available (Bourdeau et al., 2016). For example, resident medical doctors were more likely to experience signs of burnout when they perceived negative attitudes from leadership regarding the use of work-life benefits (Westercamp et al., 2018). Further, the attitudes of front-line managers play a significant role in how work-life benefits are shared and applied with employees in their units (McCarthy et al., 2010). Managers may believe that employees have equal access to available work-life benefits, yet employees may perceive impediments to fair and open access to the work-life benefits they need. A study of 229 managers and 511 employees demonstrated a gap in perceptions of access to work-life benefits (Vidal et al., 2012). Similarly, a study of 35 managers revealed that decisions

about who receives work-life balance benefits are based on their own perceptions of fairness (Daverth et al., 2016).

In fact, Poelmans and Beham (2008) envision the leader/manager as the central facet of bringing about work-life change in organizations. They claim: "...all previous organizational efforts of adopting, designing, and implementing work-life policies in an organization, which may have taken years, converge in single, discretionary decisions of supervisors...whether or not to apply these policies to specific employees in their work units" (Poelmans & Beham, 2008, p. 394). In this way, the leader/manager decides how the work-life policies are enacted and who on their team will benefit. At the unit level, managers act as gatekeepers to formal and informal work-life benefits (Laharnar et al., 2013). The manager's own attitudes about work-life intersections, personal experiences navigating the tensions that arise, external and internal pressures, and family responsibilities may directly impact how work-life policies are applied in daily operations (Daverth et al., 2016). Creating work-life opportunities for employees is difficult for managers who are themselves working long hours, experiencing work-life conflict, and navigating the requirements of the organization to maintain the bottom line (Kasper et al., 2005; Kossek & Lambert, 2003; Maxwell, 2005). The manager implicitly defines acceptable work-life practices, regardless of official policies, based on his or her own behavior as well as unit level decisions about what is allowed. Therefore, it is expected that greater manager support will have a positive effect on the relationship between the total number of work-life benefits and perceptions of work-life balance.

Hypothesis 7: Higher levels of perceived manager support will strengthen the relationship between total work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance.

The research questions and hypotheses that guide this study examine the relationship between publicized work-life policies, ranging from basic business case benefits to progressive social responsibility benefits, and employee perceptions of work-life balance as they are communicated in the public sphere. The analysis further explores the moderating role of industry sector, organizational culture, and perceived managerial support as key moderators of the relationship between work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The current study examined the relationship between corporate work-life policies that are publicized via company websites and employee perceptions of work-life balance as demonstrated through publicly available ratings. The publicly available data used for the analysis were gleaned from corporate websites and Indeed.com ratings. The corporate website data and Indeed.com employee ratings are both published for public audiences and individually represent the company's brand reputation from the corporate perspective and the employee perspective.

Sample Companies

The companies on the Indeed.com list include well-known U.S.-based firms from a variety of industries (e.g., retail, food services, financial, technology, insurance, education). A total sample of 300 companies within three general industry categories were selected by generating a list of companies based on the North American Industry Classification System's (NAICS) codes for each industry: 1) wholesale and retail trade, 2) financial activities, and 3) leisure and hospitality. One hundred companies from each of the three industries, for a total sample of 300 companies, were randomly selected from these lists then searched on Indeed.com to ensure they had a review profile available. Including 100 companies from each industry category allowed for meaningful comparisons between industries. The sample companies ranged in annual sales and number of employees as well as headquarter locations, providing a diverse cross-section of American corporations.

Variables and Data Sources

Work-life Policies on Company Websites

Publicized work-life policies served as the independent variable in this study. Data for these policies were gleaned from company websites. Corporate websites are a primary, public-facing medium of communication for many U.S. companies. For this study, relevant web content within the corporate site most likely reside in sections that highlight CSR efforts (e.g., sustainability, health and safety, volunteerism), diversity and inclusion initiatives (e.g., policies or benefits for a diverse workforce), and human resources (e.g., employee benefits). Web pages dedicated to human resources are usually developed to appeal to prospective employees by listing current job openings and employee benefits. They are aimed at attracting talented employees by highlighting the advantages of working at the company, including work-life balance benefits such as paid time off, flex-time, onsite services, and more.

On each company website, the webpages were explored until no new work-life references were discovered. The webpages selected for this analysis fit into four main categories: 1) homepage and about pages, 2) current or prospective employee pages (e.g., HR or career pages), 3) diversity and inclusion pages, and 4) corporate responsibility or community involvement pages, including an attached corporate social responsibility or sustainability report when available. Since company websites vary in available webpages and navigation, a detailed record of the specific webpages with links were kept for each company included in the analysis.

Coding Work-life Policies

Work-life initiatives are defined broadly as any policy or practice that facilitates an employee's ability to manage work and life roles. A priori codes were developed for work-life policies based on the five business case categories identified by Lobel and

Kossek (1996) and the three emerging CSR categories for a total of eight categories as follows: 1) time-based, 2) financial-based, 3) informational-based, 4) job design-based, and 5) direct service-based, plus 6) organizational culture, 7) safety and wellness, and 8) volunteerism. These eight categories include items like parental leave policies, flexible work schedules or virtual work opportunities, on-site facilities for childcare or other services, or paid time to volunteer in the community. For instance, companies may describe work flexibility in terms of work schedule, which falls into the time-based category, or describe the ability to work from a remote location, which fits into the job-design based category. Publicized work-life policies were coded into eight work-life benefit categories using NVivo 12 coding software and operationalized based on a priori codes developed during a pilot study. In the pilot study, website content for a random sample of 100 companies from the 2018 Fortune 1000 list was gathered and coded as part of a quantitative content analysis of work-life benefits (Lehrke, 2018). Of the eight work-life categories, Direct Services and Financial benefits had the highest number of work-life benefit references with 28 and 56 respectively while Job-design benefits had the lowest count overall with only eight. Table 3 contains the topical codes for each of the eight work-life categories based on the codebook developed in the pilot study.

Based on the coding scheme and process developed in the pilot study, the current study counted a single reference to a work-life policy as a section of text referring to a single concept and separated from other text as a sentence, phrase, or bullet point. For example, a reference to “6 weeks of paid maternity leave and 2 weeks of paid paternal leave” was coded as two separate references to distinct work-life benefits within the time-based category. Similarly, a single bullet point that lists “life insurance, disability

insurance, and health insurance” was counted as three separate references since each phrase in the list represents a distinct benefit within the financial-based category. These variations in how benefits are presented are due to how web pages are designed and how content is developed by each specific company. The goal was to capture the number of distinct benefits represented as well as the number of times each benefit was referenced. For example, a corporate sponsored volunteer benefit that was listed on the human resource page and referenced on the corporate social responsibility page counted as two references to the same benefit within the volunteerism category.

After all the web content was coded in NVivo12, the resulting category data (the content that was coded into each category) was carefully reviewed to ensure no errors were made in assigning content to categories. Any misplaced content was corrected by re-coding it to the appropriate category and removing it from the erroneous category. Once the coded content was prepared, the counts for references to work-life benefits in each work-life category for the companies in the sample were added to the dataset.

Employee Perceptions of Work-life Balance on Indeed.com

The dependent variable, employee perceptions of work-life balance, is operationalized as public ratings of corporate work-life balance on the popular job search website Indeed.com. The job search website, Indeed.com, offers job seekers a chance to view ratings and read reviews from current and/or former employees for approximately 1,000 different companies. Companies may also use these ratings and reviews in their recruiting efforts on Indeed.com to highlight their strengths. For example, a number of companies in the sample showcased links to reviews or ratings on Indeed or a similar job search site, *Glass Door*. Work-life balance is one of six dimensions of organizational

effectiveness listed on Indeed.com that current and former employees can rate for their companies. Companies are rated on a 5-star scale for six dimensions of organizational life, one of which is work/life balance. These ratings are publicly available (to post and to view) and have the potential to shape public opinion about the company, including prospective employees who are most likely to review these ratings on the company profile page on Indeed.com when job seeking. Reviewer comments are visible on the company profile page alongside the ratings. Work-life balance rating data was collected for each of the companies in the sample as well as the number of reviews at the time of the data collection.

Posting a review is a simple process and accessible to the public. To test the process, the author posted a review of a former employer, answering all questions (e.g., Do you approve of the CEO?) and providing comments and ratings in each review section. At submission, the form prompted a login via Google, Facebook, or account email. After selecting a login option, the final message stated: “Your review will appear on the site after it has been reviewed and approved. In some instances, this can take several days.” (The review was posted publicly the following day.) There was no apparent process for verifying that the reviewer was in fact a former employee of the company being rated. While this may pose challenges for considering the accuracy of ratings and reviews, the public access aspect is important for the current study because these reviews and ratings provide current and former employees with an external space in which to share their perceptions of the company. Making the process complicated or overly rigorous may inhibit reviewers from posting their candid opinions.

Moderating Variables

It is reasonable to expect that specific company characteristics may moderate the relationship between corporate work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance. Data for the moderating variables was collected from publicly available databases.

Industry. The three general industries used for this study were based on primary NAICS codes: 1) wholesale and retail trade (codes 42, 44-45), 2) financial activities (codes 52-53), and 3) leisure and hospitality (codes 71-72). NAICS codes are used by companies and the U.S. government to classify business types, providing a standard way of identifying uniform industry data. Company lists within each of the industry categories were generated by searching the ReferenceUSA database, a repository of company data available through the university library, for the respective NAICS codes. Randomly selected companies that are classified within each industry were checked for a company profile on Indeed.com. Companies that met the industry code and Indeed.com profile criteria were included in the sample of 100 companies in each of the three industry categories.

Culture and Management Ratings. In addition to the Work-life Balance ratings, the Indeed.com company profiles include 5-star ratings for both Culture and Management as dimensions of organizational effectiveness. A supportive organizational culture was operationalized as the Culture rating and perceived manager support was operationalized as the Management rating. A 5-star rating indicates a more positive culture and higher degree of manager support. This data was collected at the same time as the Work-life Balance ratings.

Control Variables

It is reasonable to expect that companies with higher numbers of employees and higher annual sales may have the means and incentive to offer more robust work-life benefits than their smaller, less profitable counterparts. Therefore, the analysis included two control variables, company size and financial performance, to ensure fair comparisons across companies. Company size was measured as the total number of employees and annual sales served as a proxy for financial performance. The number of employees and annual sales for the most recent year was collected from the ReferenceUSA database available through the university library.

Data Analysis

The primary statistical analysis explored the relationship between the independent variable, work-life policies publicized on corporate websites as a form of CSR, and the business-oriented dependent variable, employee perceptions of work-life balance. A hierarchical linear regression model-building approach was used to answer the two research questions and test the seven hypotheses. The benefits of using a model-building approach included the ability to identify the additive predictive power of each variable or sets of variable introduced during the model-building process. The statistical software SPSSv26 was used to run all of the statistical analyses. Both statistical and practical significance of model results and the performance of individual predictors were reported using the following statistical indices. The model results were reported and evaluated for statistical significance using F-values and p-values while R^2 demonstrated the practical significance of the model. For each level of the model, model change results

were reported using the change in F-values (ΔF) and p-value for ΔF as an indication of statistical significance and the change in R^2 as an indicator of practical significance.

Finally, results for individual predictor variables were reported for statistical significance using t-values and p-values along with b (slope), standard error, and the semi-partial correlation squared values to show practical significance.

Each of the three model sets included the key predictor variables in a progression of models beginning with the two control variables in Model 1. In the first model set, the relationship between the total work-life benefits for all eight categories and employee perceptions of work-life balance was examined to answer the overarching question guiding this study (RQ1). Two subsequent sets of models were run to examine different operationalizations of work-life benefits (i.e., Tier 2 + Tier 3 benefits and Tier 3 benefits, respectively). The dependent variable in each model set remained employee perceptions of work-life balance. The three model sets are outlined in Table 4, which illustrates the regression model, the research question or hypothesis being tested, and the independent variables included at each model level.

The first model in Model Set 1 began with the two control variables: company size and financial performance predicting employee perceptions of work-life balance. This initial regression model provided a baseline for comparing the incremental variance explained in employee perceptions by the variables of interest. Model 2 tested the main effects for total work-life benefits and employee perceptions. This model answered Research Question 1,

demonstrating the strength of the relationship between the number of work-life benefits a company communicates and employee perceptions of work-life balance, while controlling for company size and financial performance. In Model 3, the main effects for industry were added to the regression model by dummy coding the industry categories. The results of Model 4 answered Research Question 2, which explored the relationship between total work-life benefits and employee perceptions across three industry categories: 1) wholesale and retail trade, 2) financial activities, and 3) leisure and hospitality. Group comparisons across industries allowed for meaningful conclusions to be drawn about how CSR influences business outcomes in specific industry contexts. Next, Model 5 demonstrated the main effects for organizational culture and manager support followed by the interaction of these variables with total work-life benefits in Model 6 to test Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 7, respectively. Hypothesis 6 predicted that higher ratings of positive organizational culture would have a positive impact on the relationship between the total number of work-life benefits and employee perceptions. Similarly, Hypothesis 7 expected higher levels of manager support to strengthen the relationship between total work-life benefits and employee perceptions.

Model Set 2 included the control variables in Model 1, then Model 2 introduced the main effect for the sum of Tier 2 and Tier 3 benefits to test Hypothesis 1. Specifically, Hypothesis 1 posited that a combination of Tier 2 and Tier 3 work-life benefits would offer more explanatory power in employee perceptions than Tier 1 benefits. Industry dummy codes were added in Model 3

and the moderating effect of industry on the relationship between Tiers 2 and 3 combined and employee perceptions were examined in Model 4 to test Hypothesis 3. Hypothesis 3 posited that a stronger relationship exists between Tiers 2 and 3 benefits and employee perceptions for companies in wholesale and retail trade and financial activities industries versus the leisure and hospitality industry. The main effects for organizational culture and manager support were included in Model 6.

Model Set 3 began with the control variables in Model 1, then progressed to a breakdown of each work-life benefit tier in Model 2. Isolating the main effect of Tier 3 benefits tested Hypothesis 2, which predicted that companies with a higher number of Tier 3 benefits, with their CSR focus, would also have higher employee perceptions of work-life balance. Model 3 added the main effect for industry using dummy codes, then Model 4 tested the interactions for industry and Tier 2 to test Hypothesis 4, which predicted that the relationship between Tier 2 benefits and employee perceptions was stronger for financial activities companies compared to their wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industry counterparts. Model 4 also tested Hypothesis 5 by examining the impact of Tier 3 benefits on employee perceptions for financial activities companies versus wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality companies. Model 6 concluded with the main effects for organizational culture and manager support for consistency across all model sets.

Taken together, these three hierarchical regression model sets

demonstrated the incremental variance in employee perceptions of work-life balance that were explained by each variable or combination of variables of interest

Chapter4: Results

Descriptive Statistics and Planned Analyses

Statistical analyses began with assumption testing and descriptive statistics. The minimum score for the dependent variable work-life balance was 2.30 and the maximum score 4.40 (out of 5) with the majority of ratings clustered around the mean. The highest number of total work-life benefits publicized on a company website was 210 while some companies did not publicize any work-life benefits (minimum of zero). Similarly, some companies publicized zero work-life benefits in Tiers 1, 2, and 3 while the highest number of benefits in each tier were 160, 77, and 114, respectively. Since Tier 1 includes the traditional business case benefits in the financial- and time-based categories, it makes sense that Tier 1 had the highest number of work- life benefits in any tier. However, it is interesting to note that the more progressive CSR-oriented benefits of Tier 3 (organizational culture, safety & wellness, and volunteerism) outnumber the more moderate business case Tier 2 benefits (direct-service, informational, and job-design- based).

The two control variables, company size and financial performance, were found to be curvilinear, failing to meet the assumption of linearity. A natural log transformation was computed for each variable, which resolved the issue and created linear variables that were used in the analysis. Descriptive statistics and intercorrelations for the variables are provided in Table 5.

The correlation matrix (see Table 5) revealed that ratings on the three Indeed.com dimensions - work-life balance, organizational culture, and

managerial support - were highly correlated. The multicollinearity among these variables indicates that common method variance may be impacting the relationships between these variables. More specifically, it appears that rather than rating each Indeed.com dimension separately, based on the unique aspects of each rating dimension, respondents' ratings were contaminated with their general impressions of their work experience at the company. Indeed.com ratings of organizational culture and managerial support were proposed to moderate the effect of work-life benefits and Indeed.com ratings of work-life balance, the outcome of interest in this study. Including Indeed.com ratings of organizational culture and managerial support in the current analysis would compromise the validity of the conclusions that can be drawn from study results; therefore, the variables organizational culture and managerial support were removed from the analysis. Thus, Hypothesis 6 and 7 were neither supported nor unsupported because they cannot be validly tested using these data.

The high correlations between total work-life benefits and Tier 1-3 benefits make sense since Tier 1-3 benefits are merely sub-sets of the total number of work-life benefits that companies publicize on their websites. These correlations are not problematic for this analysis because these variables are not entered into the statistical models simultaneously (e.g., total work-life benefits and Tier 1 benefits together). Finally, the continuous independent variables were centered at their respective means before computing the interaction terms

so that interaction effects could be accurately interpreted. The results of the hierarchical regression models are reported for each model set below.

Model Set 1: Total Work-life Benefits

Model Set 1 explored the relationship between the total work-life benefits and perceptions of work-life balance to answer Research Question 1. This model set also examined the moderating effects of industry on the relationship between total work-life benefits and work-life balance perceptions to answer Research Question 2. The control variables of company size and financial performance were entered as predictors of work-life balance in Model 1 with a non-significant effect, $R^2 = < .01$, $F(2,297) = .04$, $p > .05$. The total work-life benefits variable was added in Model 2, which improved the incremental predictive value of the model, $\Delta R^2 = .02$, $\Delta F(1,296) = 6.50$, $p < .05$. The addition of industry main effects in Model 3 further enhanced the prediction of perceptions of work-life balance, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F(2,294) = 6.71$, $p < .01$. Model 4 included all previous variables plus the interactions for industry and work-life benefits, but failed to add to the predictive value beyond Model 3, $\Delta R^2 = < .01$, $\Delta F(2,292) = .33$, $p > .05$. However, the combination of predictors included in Model 4, which included all predictors added throughout the four incremental models in Model Set 1, was statistically significant in predicting work-life balance ratings, $R^2 = .07$, $F(7,292) = 2.98$, $p < .01$. Individual variable results for Model Set 1 are reported in Table 6.

Research Question 1 explored the primary relationship between the

total number of work- life benefits and perceptions of work-life balance. The individual variable results (reported in Table 6) indicated that this relationship was non-significant when holding all other variables constant in the full model (Model 4). Results in Model 4 suggested statistically significant industry differences in perceptions of work-life balance. Specifically, the financial activities industry had significantly higher work-life balance perceptions than the wholesale and retail trade industry, contributing 3.2% of unique variance (semi-partial correlation squared) in work- life balance perceptions when accounting for all other variables in the model. However, perceptions of work-life balance in the financial activities industry were not significantly different from their counterparts in the leisure and hospitality industry. Leisure and hospitality companies had higher work-life balance perceptions on average than wholesale and retail trade companies, adding another 1.4% of unique variance. In practical terms, wholesale and retail trade companies showed an average work-life balance score of 3.55, this was .16 points lower than the average for financial activities companies and .13 points lower than the average for leisure and hospitality companies. Research Question 2 focused on the potential moderating effect of industry on the relationship between total work-life benefits and work-life balance perceptions. However, the results of the interactions between total work-life benefits and industries, tested in Model 4, suggested statistically non-significant moderating effects, controlling for the main effects tested in the final model.

In summary, results for Model Set 1 indicated that total work-life

benefit scores are related to work-life balance mean ratings, when controlling for company size and financial performance, but were unrelated once controlling for the companies' industry (RQ1). Results indicated that work-life balance mean ratings differ by industry. Specifically, those rating employers in retail and wholesale trade rated work-life balance of their companies as lower, on average, than those rating their employers in finance and leisure industries. However, results did not indicate that industry significantly moderated the relationship between work-life benefit scores and work-life balance mean ratings (RQ2). While Model Set 1 tested the impact of total work-life benefit scores on work-life balance ratings, the distinct impact of business case and CSR-focused work-life benefits on perceptions of work-life balance across the three industries were tested in Model Set 2 and Model Set 3.

Model Set 2: Tier 2 and 3 Work-life Benefits

The second model set examined the prediction of the more progressive work-life benefits in Tier 2 and Tier 3 on work-life balance perceptions. Specifically, Hypothesis 1 predicted that companies with a higher number of Tier 2 and Tier 3 benefits will have higher employee perceptions of work-life balance. Hypothesis 3 tested the moderating effect of industry on the relationship between Tier 2 and 3 benefits and perceptions of work-life balance in Model 4. Overall model results are described below while individual variable results for each model are reported in Table 7.

After entering the control variables of company size and financial

performance in Model 1, $R^2 = < .01$, $F(2,297) = .04$, $p > .05$, the addition of a combined Tier 2 and Tier 3 variable in Model 2 significantly improved the prediction of work-life balance perceptions, $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F(1,296) = 8.60$, $p > .01$. The addition of industry in Model 3 again significantly improved the model's prediction of perceptions of work-life balance, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F(2,294) = 6.80$, $p < .01$. Finally, Model 4 added the interaction effects for industry and Tier 2 and 3, yet it did not perform incrementally better than Model 3, $\Delta R^2 = < .01$, $\Delta F(2,292) = .54$, $p > .05$. However, the linear combination of predictors included in the final model (Model 4), which included all predictors added incrementally in Model Set 2, was statistically significant in predicting work-life balance ratings, $R^2 = .08$, $F(7,292) = 3.38$, $p < .01$.

The individual results for Tier 2 and 3 benefits within the full model (Model 4) were non-significant, demonstrating that Tier 2 and 3 benefits did not predict perceptions of work-life balance when accounting for the other variables in the model. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 was not supported. The individual results for the industry interactions in Model 4 were also non-significant, suggesting that the relationship between Tier 2 and 3 benefits and work-life balance perceptions did not differ significantly for wholesale and retail trade and financial activities industries when compared to their leisure and hospitality industry counterparts. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was unsupported.

Taken together, results for Model Set 2 did not provide evidence to

support the existence of a positive relationship between the Tier 2 and 3 work-life benefits and perceptions of work-life balance (H1). The main effects for industry revealed that wholesale and retail trade companies differed significantly from leisure and hospitality companies, uniquely explaining 1.4% (semi-partial correlation squared) of the variation in work-life balance perceptions when controlling for all other variables. Companies in the financial activities industry did not vary significantly from the leisure and hospitality companies. Further, significant differences did not exist to moderate the relationship between Tier 2 and 3 benefits and work-life balance perceptions for wholesale and retail trade and financial activities industries in comparison to leisure and hospitality companies (H3). Thus, the results failed to support Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 3. Model Set 3 follows with a breakdown of each tier of benefits in relation to perceptions of work-life balance.

Model Set 3: Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 Benefits

In Model Set 3, work-life benefits were broken down into three tiers with Tier 1 representing traditional business case categories, Tier 2 representing modern business case categories, and Tier 3 characterized by progressive CSR-oriented benefits. The goal of this part of the analysis was to determine whether specific categories of work-life benefits had a greater impact on perceptions of work-life. Hypothesis 2 predicted that companies with a higher number of CSR-oriented benefits (Tier 3) would have higher perceptions of work-life balance.

Hypothesis 4 and Hypothesis 5 examined the moderating effects of industry on

the relationship between work-life balance perceptions and Tier 2 and Tier 3 benefits, respectively. Model results are described below and Individual variable results for each model are reported in Table 8.

The two control variables were once again entered at Model 1, and the inclusion of these variables did not statistically significantly predict work-life balance perceptions, $R^2 = < .01$, $F(2,297) = .04$, $p > .05$. In Model 2, separate Tier 1, Tier 2, and Tier 3 work-life benefits were added, improving the incremental performance of the model in predicting work-life balance perceptions, $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F(3,294) = 2.99$, $p > .05$. In Model 3, the main effects for industry were added to the analysis, specifically comparing wholesale and retail trade companies and leisure and hospitality companies to their counterparts in the financial activities industry. Model 3 performed significantly better than Model 2, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F(2,292) = 6.66$, $p > .01$. The full model, Model 4, added industry interactions with Tier 2 and Tier 3 benefits. The addition of the interaction terms failed to make a significant incremental improvement over the previous model in the prediction of work-life balance perceptions, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\Delta F(4,288) = .36$, $p > .05$; however, the linear combination of predictors in Model 4, including all predictors added incrementally in Model Set 3, was statistically significant in predicting work-life balance perceptions, $R^2 = .08$, $F(11,288) = 2.18$, $p > .05$.

The effect of Tier 3 work-life benefits in the full model (Model 4) was non-significant, holding all other predictors in the full model constant. This failed to support Hypothesis 2, which expected CSR-oriented benefits to

significantly predict work-life balance perceptions.

Individually, wholesale and retail trade companies were significantly different than financial activities companies, contributing 3.1% of unique variance (semi-partial correlation squared), while leisure and hospitality companies were not significantly different than their financial activities counterparts in this model (see Table 8). Practically speaking, employees from wholesale and retail trade companies rated their work-life balance .16 lower on average than employees from financial activities companies with an average rating of 3.72.

Lastly, Hypothesis 4 posited that the relationship between Tier 2 benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance would be stronger among companies in the financial activities industry than the wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries. The individual results for the interaction of industry and Tier 2 benefits (see Table 4) failed to demonstrate statistically significant differences between financial activities companies and their counterparts in wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries. Therefore, Hypothesis 4 was not supported. Similarly, Hypothesis 5 predicted that the relationship between Tier 3 work-life benefits and employee perceptions of work-life balance would be stronger among the financial activities industry than the wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries. The individual interaction results are reported in Table 8. Taken together, the Model Set 3 analysis results did not support the existence of a positive relationship between Tier 3 benefits and work-life balance perceptions (H2) or moderating effects for industry and Tier 2 (H4)

or Tier 3 (H5) work-life benefits when comparing financial activities companies to their counterparts in the wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries.

Post Hoc Analyses

The questionable construct validity of the outcome variable, work-life balance perceptions, in the planned analyses, as evidenced by the high degree of multicollinearity of all the Indeed.com dimensions, may have contributed to the non-significant findings. However, the question of whether company size, financial performance, and/or industry predicts the number or types of work-life benefits on corporate websites was not posed. The current data provide an opportunity to explore these potential relationships through a series of post hoc hierarchical regressions. In each post hoc analysis, company size and financial performance were included as control variables. To correct for the potential increase in familywise error due to multiple regression models, the Bonferroni adjustment was used to guard against an inflated alpha level ($p = .05/5 = .01$). In summary, this follow-up analyses illuminate potential relationships between company size, financial performance, industry, and work-life benefits. The first analysis compared total work-life benefits across industries while the four subsequent analyses compared Tier 1, 2, 3, and Tiers 2 + 3 across industries, respectively.

Post Hoc Model Set 1: Total Work-life Benefits

In the initial analysis of total work-life benefits, the combination of control variables - company size and financial performance - included in

Model 1 demonstrated statistically significant prediction of work-life benefits, $R^2 = .22$, $F(2,297) = 42.39$, $p < .001$. In Model 2, the addition of industry as a predictor of total work-life benefits significantly improved the overall performance of the model, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F(2,295) = 8.46$, $p < .001$. The linear combination of predictors added incrementally across the two models – company size, financial performance, and industry – was statistically significant in predicting total work-life benefits, $R^2 = .26$, $F(4,295) = 26.49$, $p < .001$. Table 9 illustrates the model-building steps and individual coefficient results for each model.

Three predictors from the full model (Model 3) significantly predicted total work-life benefit values (see Table 9). First, company size was positively related to total work-life benefits, accounting for 1.9% of unique variance in total work-life benefit values. The second and third significant effects were industry differences, with financial activities companies publicizing a greater number of WL benefit than either wholesale and retail trade companies ($sr^2 = 4.1\%$) and leisure and hospitality companies ($sr^2 = 1.7\%$). No other predictors were statistically significant in the full model.

Post Hoc Model Set 2: Tier 1 Work-life Benefits

The next analysis examined differences in the traditional business case benefits of Tier 1 across industries while controlling for company size and financial performance. The combination of control variables significantly predicted the number of Tier 1 work-life benefits in Model 1, $R^2 = .15$, $F(2,297) = 25.16$, $p < .001$. The addition of industry in Model 2 significantly

improved the model's ability to predict Tier 1 benefits, $\Delta R^2 = .03$, $\Delta F(2,295) = 5.87$, $p < .01$. The linear combination of predictors included incrementally across Model Set 2 significantly predicted Tier 1 work-life benefits, $R^2 = .18$, $F(4,295) = 15.93$, $p < .001$. Table 10 provides the individual variable results for each model, most notably the differences in Tier 1 benefits across industries.

In the full model (Model 2), the only significant effect was industry differences between financial activities companies and wholesale and retail trade companies. Specifically, financial activities companies publicize a higher number of Tier 1 work-life benefits than wholesale and retail trade companies ($sr^2 = 3.3\%$). No other predictors were statistically significant in the full model.

Post Hoc Model Set 3: Tier 2 Work-life Benefits

The modern business case Tier 2 work-life benefits were analyzed across industries while holding company size and financial performance constant. In the first model, the combination of company size and financial performance significantly predicted the number of Tier 2 work-life benefits, $R^2 = .19$, $F(2,297) = 34.38$, $p < .001$. The addition of industry in Model 2 incrementally enhanced the model's predictive power in combination with the control variables, $\Delta R^2 = .07$, $\Delta F(2,295) = 13.46$, $p < .001$. The final model results showed a statistically significant effect for the combination of company size, financial performance, and industry on Tier 2 benefits, $R^2 = .26$, $F(4,295) = 25.36$, $p < .001$. The individual variable correlations for each model are provided in Table 11.

Two predictors from the full model (Model 2) significantly predicted Tier 2 work-life benefits (see Table 11). Both significant effects were industry differences, with financial activities companies publicizing a greater number of Tier 2 work-life benefits than either wholesale and retail trade companies ($sr^2 = 6.7\%$) and leisure and hospitality companies ($sr^2 = 2.3\%$). No other predictors were statistically significant in the full model.

Post Hoc Model Set 4: Tier 3 Work-life Benefits

The combination of company size and financial performance significantly predicted progressive, CSR-oriented Tier 3 work-life benefits, $R^2 = .18$, $F(2,297) = 32.69$, $p < .001$. Unlike Tier 1 and Tier 2 benefits, the prediction of the most progressive, CSR-oriented work-life benefits (i.e., Tier 3) was not significantly improved by adding industry in Model 2, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $\Delta F(2,295) = 2.58$, $p < .10$. The full model, which included the linear combination of company size, financial performance, and industry, did significantly predict Tier 3 work-life benefits, $R^2 = .20$, $F(4,295) = 17.81$, $p < .001$. The model-building steps and individual correlations are reported in Table 12. The individual predictors in the full model (Model 2) did not significantly predict Tier 3 work-life benefits (see Table 12).

Post Hoc Model Set 5: Tier 2 and 3 Work-life Benefits

As in the planned analysis, it is reasonable to expect that industries may differ in the number of work-life benefits they publicize in Tier 2 and Tier 3 combined. The final post hoc analysis examined these potential differences

while controlling for company size and financial performance. The control variables were added in Model 1, $R^2 = .21$, $F(2,297) = 39.17$, $p < .001$. The regression results for Model 2 demonstrated that the addition of industry, in combination with company size and financial performance, incrementally improved the model's ability to predict Tier 2 and 3 work-life benefits, $\Delta R^2 = .04$, $\Delta F(2,295) = 6.94$, $p = .001$, with a statistically significant final model, $R^2 = .24$, $F(4,295) = 23.83$, $p < .001$. Table 13 illustrates the model- building process and individual coefficients.

In the full model (Model 2), two predictors significantly predicted Tier 2 and 3 work-life benefits (see Table 13). Both significant effects were industry differences, with financial activities companies publicizing a greater number of Tier 2 and 3 work-life benefits than either wholesale and retail trade companies ($sr^2 = 3.2\%$) and leisure and hospitality companies ($sr^2 = 1.9\%$). No other predictors were statistically significant in the full m

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion

The primary question guiding this inquiry is whether the number of work-life benefits publicized on a corporate website is related to employee perceptions of work-life balance (RQ1). While this relationship was initially statistically significant when the total work-life benefits were entered with the control variables, the effect was non-significant once controlling for industry main effects. Therefore, the number of work-life benefits communicated on a company website did not significantly predict work-life balance perceptions when accounting for company size, financial performance, and industry. Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 further examined the relationship between specific types of benefits, namely Tier 2 and 3 benefits combined (H1) and Tier 3 benefits (H2), and work-life balance perceptions, yet the results failed to offer evidence that these relationships exist, leaving Hypotheses 1 and 2 unsupported.

The second research question considered the moderating effects of industry on the relationship between total work-life benefits and work-life balance perceptions. While the regression models did not demonstrate industry as a moderating variable, there was evidence that industry served as a significant predictor of work-life balance perceptions. That is, work-life balance perceptions varied across wholesale and retail trade, financial activities, and leisure and hospitality industries. Aligned with Research Question 2, Hypotheses 3, 4, and 5 tested the potential moderating effect of

industry differences on the relationship between Tier 2 and 3 benefits, Tier 2 benefits, and Tier 3 benefits, respectively. Consistent with Research Question 2, the results showed a lack of support for industry as a moderating variable between tiered work- life benefits and work-life balance perceptions.

Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 7 could not be tested due to multicollinearity among the Indeed.com ratings used to operationalize managerial support and organizational culture.

To further explore the industry differences, post hoc regression models demonstrated that the financial activities industry varied significantly in the number of work-life benefits companies communicate on corporate websites in comparison to the wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries. A summary of industry differences is outlined in Table 14. Finally, the control variables, company size and financial performance, did not significantly predict employees' work-life balance perceptions in the planned models. In contrast, the post hoc analysis revealed that company size was significantly associated with the total number of work- life benefits publicized on company websites even after controlling for financial performance and industry (see Post Hoc Model Set 1 results in Table 9). Financial performance was also significantly associated with total work-life benefits, Tier 1 benefits, Tier 3 benefits, and Tier 2 and 3 benefits while controlling for company size; however, these statistically significant relationships became non-significant after controlling for industry (see Post Hoc Model Sets 1, 2, 4, and 5 results in Tables 9, 10, 12, and 13, respectively). Larger and more financially robust

companies are more likely to communicate more work-life benefits on public-facing websites.

Despite findings generally suggesting null results regarding study research questions and hypotheses, the findings do offer several insights and contributions to work-life research at the organizational level that have important implications for organizational leaders as they implement policies and practices to bolster the company's strategic advantage. First, the multicollinearity of the Indeed.com ratings, including the outcome variable work-life balance, indicates common method bias and calls into question the construct validity of this measure. It is possible that the limited strength of the relationship between work-life benefits and work-life balance perceptions was due to weak construct validity in the outcome measure. Industry differences in work-life balance perceptions demonstrated by the regression models may also be inaccurate due to contaminated construct validity in the Indeed.com Work-life Balance ratings. Specifically, if raters are not clearly distinguishing work-life balance from other aspects of their corporate experience, then this measure is not accurately capturing the intended outcome.

Further, this may be impacted by the types of current and former employees who complete Indeed.com ratings and reviews. Employees who post ratings may be those who are highly satisfied or highly dissatisfied with their experiences at the company. Although five distinct dimensions are rated on Indeed.com, the high level of multicollinearity among these dimensions suggests that raters are actually rating how happy employees are with their

overall experience at the company with little to no distinction between each dimension.

Second, work-life benefits that are publicized on corporate websites are intended for public audiences such as prospective employees, investors, and consumers rather than the internal communication with employees. The work-life benefits on the company website may actually have more impact on prospective employees when making decisions about submitting applications to companies of interest. In this way, the work-life benefits communicated via a corporate website likely function primarily as a marketing tool to attract talent. This is consistent with the placement of content about work-life benefits on job seeker pages and in CSR reports. If this is the case, the number of times and the types of work-life benefits that are mentioned may be more aligned with what organizational leaders believe prospective employees want rather than meeting the needs of current employees.

The overall ranking of work-life benefit categories (by the number of times benefits in each category were mentioned on company websites) may illustrate company priorities for appealing to public audiences: 1) Financial-based (5,461); 2) Information-based (1,987); 3) Volunteerism (1,835); 4) Time-based (1,446); 5) Direct-service-based (1,164); 6) Safety (1,043); 7) Culture (344); 8) Job-based (45). While financial-based benefits have a strong lead, information-based benefits and volunteerism are closely aligned in second and third place. This suggests that organizational leaders choose to emphasize benefits like training and development (information-based) and corporate-

sponsored community outreach (volunteerism) because they believe these benefits will bolster the corporate image and make it more attractive to prospective employees. Interestingly, the financial activities industry companies publicize more Tier 3 work- life benefits than leisure and hospitality companies, on average, while the industry differences between financial activities and wholesale and retail trade that were observed at other tiers drop out at Tier 3. This finding may be indicative of organizational leaders in the wholesale and retail trade industry attempting to maximize Tier 3 benefits in a simultaneous appeal to prospective employees and socially conscious consumers (as marketing). If this is the case, it serves as an example of one way that organizational leaders can strategically allocate limited resources to support dual aims and appeal to multiple audiences. As company leaders across industries begin to realize the value of progressive work-life benefits, they are likely to implement and publicize more progressive programming for employees to manage work and life while integrating business case and CSR-focused outcomes.

Third, the image that the company seeks to project to the public via the information shared on its website may not align with the actual experience of working there. Previous studies suggest that work-life policies and practices often do not align for a variety of reasons, including lack of awareness of benefits (Kumar & Chakraborty, 2013; Laharnar et al., 2013; McCarthy et al., 2010; Ollier-Malaterre & Andrade, 2016; Smith & Gardner, 2007), lack of access to benefits (e.g., eligibility; Blair-Loy et al., 2011; Ollier-Malaterre &

Andrade, 2016; Smith & Gardner, 2007; Webber et al., 2010; Williams et al., 2013), lack of manager support (Daverth et al., 2016; Kasper et al., 2005; Kossek & Lambert, 2003; Laharnar et al., 2013; Maxwell, 2005; Mazerolle & Goodman, 2013; Vidal et al., 2012), and unsupportive organizational culture (de Sivatte et al., 2015; Koppes, 2008; Rao, 2017; Webber et al., 2010). These factors may create obstacles in this case as the robust work-life benefits touted by the company may not translate to the employees in tangible ways. For example, a maternity leave benefit that is highly publicized is likely to have little to no impact if the workforce is made up of primarily men or later career stage employees. Changing the maternity leave benefit to a more inclusive parental leave policy would make it useful to the male employees as well as the women. Further, creating a flexible leave policy that accommodates life events beyond the birth or adoption of a child maximizes the benefit's ability to support diverse employees on a range of work-life needs.

Fourth, employee expectations and preferences are also likely to influence how they perceive their work-life balance at the company (Bansal & Agarwal, 2017). One possible explanation for industry differences in both employees' work-life balance perceptions and publicized work-life benefits may be worker expectations in each industry. According to Vroom's expectancy theory, three primary factors – valence, expectancy, and instrumentality – converge to create unique motivations (Lunenburg, 2011). For instance, differences in employee demographics, such as gender, age, education, organizational rank, full- or part-time status, or other personal

factors, may influence what work-life benefits are considered most important as well as what a satisfying work-life balance looks like (valence), how well equipped the individual is to achieve work-life balance (expectancy), and whether the employees perceive company policies and practices as sufficient to meet work-life needs (instrumentality). The findings suggest that the financial activities industry is notably different from the wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality industries overall. As discussed in Chapter 3, general industry demographics show a higher number of mid-career, full-time employees in the financial activities industry compared to wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality workers.

Mid-career employees are likely to have more life roles and responsibilities to manage, including families, and those working full-time may expect access to a range of work-life benefits to facilitate a satisfying work-life balance compared to part-time employees (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018).

Specifically, the post hoc analyses focused on exploring industry differences in the number and types of work-life benefits publicized on company websites. In this case, industry differences reflected the industry characteristics overall. The number of work-life benefits publicized by the financial activities industry differed from both wholesale and retail trade and leisure and hospitality companies at nearly all tiers (see a summary of industry differences in Table 14). In each case, financial activities companies publicized more work-life benefits on average than their counterparts in the other two industries. This finding aligns with the rationale that key industry

characteristics are likely to create observable differences for work-life benefits and work-life balance perceptions. The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019) reported that the financial activities industry boasts a higher number of full-time employees (85.7%) working regular daytime hours (94.9%) than employees in wholesale and retail trade (72.3% and 74.6%, respectively) and leisure and hospitality (59.0% and 63.2%, respectively). Additionally, the financial activities workforce has a higher percentage of women (52.6%) and a large contingent of mid-career professionals aged 25-44 (45.0%) compared to the wholesale and retail trade (44.7% women and 40.3% mid-career) and leisure and hospitality (51.5% women and 39.1% mid-career). It follows that financial activities companies may publicize more work-life benefits to attract the full-time, mid-career professionals that make up the majority of their workforce. It also makes sense that these financial activities employees may have higher expectations for the benefits packages they receive (Bansal & Agarwal, 2017), further pressing the company to offer robust work-life policies to keep pace with the benefits offered by competitors.

Finally, the post hoc models revealed that the combination of company size and financial performance accounted for 22.2% of the variation in total work-life benefits, which is the largest practically significant finding across all analyses conducted. Companies with more employees and more robust finances publicize a higher number of work-life benefits on their websites. It's possible that these companies have a greater need to attract top talent as well as more resources to implement work-life policies. It is also possible that

larger, lucrative businesses have more well-developed websites that include more information and enhanced efforts to present a favorable company image, and publicizing work-life benefits are an integral part of those efforts. While the results do not establish a causal link between company size or financial performance and a higher number of work-life benefits, the analysis did demonstrate that the combination of company size and financial performance accounted for more than 20% of the variation in work-life benefits while industry contributed 7% or less of unique variance in work-life benefits communicated on company websites. In the final post hoc models, industry effects tended to be significant while the control variables were not (with the exception of company size in Post Hoc Model Set 1), suggesting that company size, financial performance, and industry co-vary highly. In short, companies in more lucrative industries may also employ more people and publicize more work-life benefits. Alternatively, it may be the case that companies that communicate more work-life benefits experience growth by attracting talent and achieving higher levels of financial performance. Either way, these relationships are important to note as organizational leaders develop strategies for creating a sustainable competitive advantage and integrating work-life benefits into these efforts.

Implications for Organizational Leaders

Organizational leaders can draw several insights from these findings. First, for leaders seeking to bring about effective change in their organizations, simply communicating work-life benefits on a public-facing platform (e.g.,

corporate website or CSR report) will not make a meaningful impact on employee perceptions of work-life balance. Like previous research demonstrating that making work-life policies is not enough to shift work-life practices (e.g., Blair-Loy et al., 2011; Daverth et al., 2016; Kumar & Chakraborty, 2013; Webber et al., 2010), the current study shows that publicizing work-life policies is not enough to significantly affect employee perceptions, regardless of the industry. Posting work-life benefits on the company website may be merely a skin-deep attempt to influence public perception, including attracting prospective employees or demonstrating corporate responsibility to socially conscious customers and investors. In order to positively influence employee perceptions, the company's emphasis on healthy work-life balance must take root in the organization's culture. Unfortunately, the potential moderating effects of organizational culture and manager support could not be tested with the current dataset, but they offer an important area of future research.

Second, the results suggest that some expectations may be specific to work in particular industries. The work-life balance expectations of a part-time, entry level hotel employee are likely to be very different than a full-time professional working at an investment firm. These potential differences in employee expectations have implications for both the number and types of work-life benefits companies offer, and how they are publicized on corporate websites to attract talent, as well as how employees perceive their work-life balance, particularly in comparison to their peers. If companies are not

meeting or exceeding industry norms in terms of work-life benefits, employees may perceive a greater deficit in their work-life balance because they believe their peers at another comparable institution have better benefits. Therefore, organizational leaders have a responsibility to examine industry norms and develop a deeper understanding of the work-life needs of the company's workforce.

Savvy organizational leaders should learn about employee expectations and preferences by conducting a needs assessment before embarking on a work-life benefits policy revision.

Simply adding benefits may be ineffective if they do not align with employees' expectations for the types of benefits and employee preferences for managing work and life. As expectancy theory posits, managing and meeting employee expectations relies on understanding what factors are influencing those expectations, such as employee demographics and industry norms (Lunenburg, 2011). For example, expanding vacation time may not enhance perceptions of work-life balance if what employees really want is the opportunity to telework. If organizational leaders conduct a needs assessment to discover which work-life benefits are most valued by the highest number of employees, they will be better equipped with the information to make strategic decisions about work-life policies and practices that maximize positive outcomes.

Practically speaking, organizational leaders can ask employees

questions like, “What would make your work-life experience better?” to gain insights into what strategies are most likely to enhance work-life balance. Inviting input from employees also gives organizational leaders a glimpse into the work-life needs of diverse employees so work-life benefits can be designed to accommodate a range of needs. In short, the number of work-life benefits publicized will not automatically translate to more favorable work-life balance perceptions, especially if those benefits are not practically accessible and useful to the employees. By learning more about how employees want their work and life spheres to intersect, organizational leaders can be sensitive to creating inclusive practices and crafting policies that do not unintentionally exclude or disadvantage certain employee groups.

Third, communicating about work-life benefits on a company website may make a difference with audiences beyond current or prospective employees. As noted earlier, publicizing work-life benefits may serve as one avenue for organizational leaders to demonstrate good CSR with socially conscious customers and investors. Yet, the work-life benefits that are highlighted will only garner favor with the organization’s stakeholders if the benefits are meaningful to the intended audiences. Costa and Menichini (2013) suggested that for CSR efforts to improve a company’s reputation, the topics that are communicated by the company must be considered valuable and important by the audience. It follows that the work-life benefits described on the company websites will only enhance perceptions if the work-life benefits are considered valuable to the audience and ranked prominently in importance

by website visitors. For instance, work- life benefits described on job search pages are likely to be viewed more frequently and considered more relevant to prospective employees than browsing customers or investors.

However, some work-life benefits are particularly well-suited to publicizing on non-job-search- related pages, such as employee volunteerism, safety standards, or diversity achievements. These examples of Tier 3 CSR-oriented work-life benefits may resonate with socially-minded prospective employees, customers, and investors alike.

Similarly, current employees' perceptions of work-life balance at the company may only be swayed when the benefits described are considered relevant and highly ranked by the employees at that time. Further, current employees may also consider whether the company's description of benefits is congruent with the employee's experiences at the company. If the publicized work-life benefits fit the employee's experiences, then the company's emphasis on work-life benefits on the website may lead to a more positive perception of work-life balance at the company. However, if the company's emphasis on work-life benefits does not match the employee's lived experiences, then the employee may have a more negative view of work-life balance after reviewing the work-life benefits on the website. Organizational leaders have a responsibility to accurately represent the work-life policies and practices of the organization during the recruitment process as this information will inform current and prospective employees' decisions about whether the company is a good fit for their individual values and needs. Perceptions of

person-organization fit can be an important factor in a worker's decision to join a company, stay with the company, or exit the company. Exploring the conditions under which a company's descriptions of work-life benefits may have a positive or negative impact on work-life balance perceptions as well as the types of work-life benefits that may be perceived as valuable and important to employees offer two more areas of inquiry that are ripe for extending work-life research.

Limitations

Although every effort was made to design and deliver a robust dataset and analysis, the study has multiple limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the data sources – namely corporate websites and Indeed.com – offered unique opportunities to examine information in the public domain that are likely to influence public perception. However, the open nature of these sources creates limitations in verifying the accuracy of the data available on them. Specifically, company websites may or may not reflect the most recent work-life benefits, depending on how often this information is updated. Further, companies vary widely in how and how much they communicate about work-life benefits, which presents two additional considerations: 1) the benefits on the website may not accurately reflect the company's offerings, and 2) consistently coding work-life benefits is challenging because formats and terms vary. For example, a direct- service benefit commonly called *Employee Resource Groups* was also titled *Associate Resource Groups*, *Business Resource Groups*, *Employee Inclusion Groups*, and even *Culture Clubs* by one

company in the sample. This study assumes that companies with a greater emphasis on work-life benefits will devote more space to describing those benefits and use standard language to do so. However, this may not be the case.

Indeed.com introduces its own inherent limitations as a data source. First, the site is highly accessible for reviewers to post ratings and comments with minimal safeguards to ensure reviews are fair, objective, and reliable representations of the current or former employee's experience. In fact, reviewers self-identify as employees with no clear process in place for employer verification of the employee's association with the company. While the open nature of the review process invites employees to share candid evaluations of the company, verifying the reliability of the ratings is impossible. For example, a disgruntled former employee may post an extremely negative score without any checks to determine objectively whether the company deserved such a harsh rating.

Further, the Indeed.com data for this study revealed the presence of common method variance, rendering the two proposed moderating variables of organizational culture and management unusable from this source. Common method variance occurs when the same bias is present in all ratings from a single reviewer. In this case, reviewers who posted positive scores for the dependent variable work-life balance also posted positive scores for organizational culture and management. As a result, there was little to no distinction between the Indeed.com

dimensions, resulting in questionable construct validity of the outcome variable work-life balance.

Perhaps the most notable limitation is the problematic measure used to operationalize work-life balance perceptions. The common method bias evident in the Indeed.com dimensions suggests that raters are not actually scoring a distinct work-life balance concept but rather a more general evaluation of how they perceive the company. Without a high degree of construct validity, the analyses using the work-life balance variable (each of the planned models) were not distinctly testing employees' perceptions of work-life balance. Further, the work-life balance ratings were scored on a 1-5 star scale, yet scores were tightly clustered around the mean, leaving limited variability and a potential restriction of range that could have diminished the strength of the observed relationships.

The final set of limitations centers on the industries used for group comparisons. To ensure a large enough sample could be randomly selected in each industry, only primary NAICS codes were used to define industry parameters. This means that the companies included in each industry sample set share only the broadest industry characteristics. For example, the wholesale and retail trade sample set includes a diverse collections of stores that sell everything from automotive parts to apparel, personal technology to groceries. While these companies clearly share common characteristics, it is easy to imagine sub-set distinctions that might be accounted for if second or third order NAICS industry codes were used instead. Due to the diversity in the sample

companies in each industry, generalizations about companies in each industry are limited. Further, only three primary industries were compared in this analysis, which limits the ability to draw sweeping conclusions about industry differences by generalizing the industry comparisons here to all industries. Lastly, only U.S. companies were included in the samples, so generalizations to internationally-based companies cannot be made. Understanding the study's limitations helps to put the findings and conclusions in proper perspective. These limitations also point the way to future research that can expand, replicate, or fill gaps in the current inquiry.

Future Research

There are several opportunities for future research that would extend this line of inquiry and add to the growing body of work-life research in meaningful ways. Since the primary interest of this study is to explore whether the number of work-life benefits companies present to the public is significantly related to employees' perceptions of work-life balance, the first area that is ripe for further exploration is other factors that may predict positive work-life balance perceptions. There are myriad factors that may influence how an employee perceives work-life balance stemming from both personal and organizational differences. For example, research suggests that men and women perceive their work-life experiences differently (DeMartino & Barbato, 2003; Griep et al., 2016; Radcliffe & Cassell, 2015; Rothbard, 2001). It is possible that gender also plays a role in what work-life benefits are considered most salient and whether the employee's perceptions at a particular

company are positive. Similarly, an employee's career stage, with the potential for an increase in adjacent roles and responsibilities that may create more tension between work and life, may significantly influence how employees rate their work-life balance. Other personal factors that may impact work-life balance perceptions include education, race, family status, and others.

At the organization, there are many more factors that may help leaders predict an employee's perceptions of work-life balance. Factors like shift work have been associated with lower satisfaction with work-life balance (Dizaho et al., 2017), so it follows that other organizational factors are likely to explain more positive perceptions of work-life balance. For example, employees in management roles may have access to more work-life benefits but they may also feel more pressure to work longer hours (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018). Future research should examine a range of potential factors that are likely to predict higher ratings of work-life balance.

Future research should also examine how employees perceive the work-life messages that are communicated via company websites. It is possible that many employees do not frequent the company's public-facing website, so the work-life benefits described there may be unknown to many employees. A future study could have employees review the work-life benefits communicated on the company website then have the participants rate their level of awareness of the benefits listed and how well the company's portrayal of work-life benefits matches their own experiences. A mixed methods study would be an excellent choice for collecting survey data through a quasi-experimental design

with a qualitative follow-up to probe employee perceptions.

While the current study focused on the perceptions of company employees (past and present), the work-life benefits described on corporate websites are most often housed on the pages designed to attract prospective employees, namely the job search pages. As such, companies that publicize work-life benefits on the corporate website are typically catering to an audience of job seekers rather than individuals currently employed with the organization. Future research should examine whether company websites and the Indeed.com reviews and ratings significantly impact the perceptions of prospective employees, their intended audience. Sample content from actual company websites and Indeed.com reviews could be used for comparisons while participants rate their overall perceptions of the companies and how likely they would be to apply for a job. This line of inquiry could also include distinctions between business case and CSR-oriented benefits to determine whether job seekers are more drawn to particular types of benefits.

Future research should also find other sources of data to operationalize and test organizational culture and management as moderators of work-life balance perceptions. Although these connections could not be tested with this dataset, the theoretical rationale for a potential relationship is solid and future research should explore these potential links.

The industry differences in work-life balance perceptions invite further exploration, especially to uncover explanations for the similarity between financial activities and leisure and hospitality companies. One potential avenue

to pursue is to select company samples using sub- category industry codes rather than primary codes in order to narrow industry characteristics and provide more specific industry comparisons. Additionally, other primary or secondary NAICS codes can be used to create company samples that allow for industry comparisons beyond the three included in this study.

Finally, the study limited the influence of national culture by using only U.S.-based companies. Given the evidence that perceptions of work-life balance vary from country to country due to differences in national legislation (Moss & Deven, 2006) along with ideas about leadership and managerial attitudes about work-life benefits (Been et al., 2017), future research should replicate the current study with non-U.S. companies. Non-U.S. companies may differ in how they communicate with the public about the work-life benefits they offer as well as how employees perceive work-life balance. It is reasonable to expect that differences in cultural norms and individual expectations for managing work and life in satisfying ways may vary across national lines.

Conclusion

In short, more mentions of work-life benefits on the company website did not enhance the company's reputation for work-life balance with its employees in meaningful ways.

Organizational leaders need to do a better job of translating work-life benefits in the workplace to touch employee experiences and shape their perceptions. Another major contribution made by this study is the finding that industries do differ on both their employees' work-life balance perceptions and the number and types of work-life benefits that are publicized. This suggests that industry norms and employee expectations within those industries shape work-life experiences. Finally, the more progressive CSR-oriented benefits in Tier 2 and Tier 3 are positively associated with higher perceptions of work-life balance. For example, corporate volunteerism is a frontrunner in work-life benefits that offer organizational leaders an avenue for enhancing employee perceptions while integrating a triple bottom line approach to creating a competitive advantage.

Appendix A: Tables

Table 1

Work-life Categorizations

Tier Level	Business vs. CSR Case	Work-Life Benefit Categories
Tier 1	Foundational business case	1) time, 2) financial
Tier 2	Modern business case	3) informational, 4) job design, 5) direct service
Tier 3	Progressive CSR case	6) supportive organizational culture, 7) safety and wellness, 8) volunteerism

Table 2*Industry Characteristics*

Industry Category	Job Status		Work Schedule		Women	Age
	Workforce Diversity					
	Full-time	Regular Part-time	Daytime	Shift		
Wholesale and Retail Trade	72.3%	27.7%	74.6%	25.4%	44.7%	16-24: 20.0%
						25-44: 40.3%
						45-64: 33.1%
Financial Activities	85.7%	14.3%	94.9%	5.1%	52.6%	16-24: 6.5%
						25-44: 45.0%
						45-64: 41.3%
Leisure and Hospitality	59.0%	41.0%	63.2%	36.8%	51.5%	16-24: 33.2%
						25-44: 39.1%
						45-64: 23.6%

Note. Industry demographic data from the U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

(2019a; 2019b; 2019c). Age breakdown is based on Hall's (1996) Career Stage Model.

Table 3*A Priori Codes*

A Priori Code Categories	Example Category Benefits
Time-based	Parental leave, personal time off, compressed work week, sick time, holidays, bereavement, jury duty, and military leave
Financial-based	Health, disability, and life insurance, pet insurance, corporate discounts on products or services, tuition reimbursement, monetary incentives, adoption assistance, flexible spending accounts, health savings accounts
Information-based	Resource and referral programs, workshops or seminars on various topics such as financial planning or stress management, health fairs, training and development opportunities, mentoring
Job design	Job sharing, remote work options such as telecommuting, alternative schedules
Direct service	On-site or near-site childcare, meal services, on-site gym facility, Employee Resource Groups, on-site medical services, Employee Assistance Programs, lactation program, credit union membership, Health Advocate
Organizational culture advancement	Manager support for diverse needs, equitable opportunities, positive work environment, awards or recognition related to work-life (e.g., best companies for work-life), foster healthy work-life integration for employees
Safety & wellness	Safety protocols, on-site medical equipment for safety initiatives, CPR/first aid training, ergonomic office equipment, employee wellness programs
Volunteerism volunteer efforts	Company funded volunteer time, coordinated

Table 4*Summary of Hierarchical Regression Models*

	DV	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Model Set 1	Employee perceptions	Control variables: Company size Financial Performance	Main effect: Total WL benefit count (RQ1)	Main effect: Industry dummy codes	Interaction: Industry dummy codes x Total WL benefit count (RQ2)	Main effect: Culture ratings Management ratings	Interaction: Culture ratings x Total WL benefit count (H6) Management ratings x Total WL benefit count (H7)
Model Set 2	Employee perceptions	Control variables: Company size Financial Performance	Main Effect: Tier 2-3 WL benefit count (H1)	Main effect: Industry dummy codes	Interaction: Industry dummy codes x Tier 2-3 WL benefit count (H3)	Main effect: Culture ratings Management ratings	
Model Set 3	Employee perceptions	Control variables: Company size Financial Performance	Main Effect: Tier 1 WL benefit count Tier 2 WL benefit count Tier 3 WL benefit count (H2)	Main effect: Industry dummy codes	Interaction: Industry dummy codes x Tier 2 WL benefit count (H4) Industry dummy codes x Tier 3 WL benefit count (H5)	Main effect: Culture ratings Management ratings	

Table 5*Correlation Matrix*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Work-Life Balance	3.51	.32										
2. Company Size (log)	9.18	1.53	-.01									
3. Financial Performance (log)	21.81	2.16	-.02	.74**								
4. Total Work-Life Benefits	44.42	45.54	.12*	.39**	.47**							
5. Tier 1 Work-Life Benefits	23.02	25.09	.07	.33**	.37**	.88**						
6. Tier 2 Work-Life Benefits	10.65	13.09	.14*	.34**	.43**	.90**	.67**					
7. Tier 3 Work-Life Benefits	10.74	14.78	.13*	.34**	.42**	.78**	.43**	.76**				
8. Tier 2 + 3 Work-Life Benefits	21.39	26.16	.14*	.36**	.46**	.89**	.58**	.93**	.95**			
9. Organizational Culture	3.46	.34	.84**	.11	-.03	.11	.10	.11	.08	.10		
10. Management	3.26	.32	.84**	.05	-.10	.06	.04	.06	.06	.06	.90**	

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 6*Model Set 1*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Intercept	3.56	.19	18.69	3.80	.21	18.02	3.55	.31	11.49	3.53	.32	10.99
Company Size (log)	< .01	.02	.10	< - .01	.02	- .09	.01	.02	.72	.02	.02	.76
Financial Performance (log)	< - .01	.01	- .26	- .01	.01	- .98	- .01	.02	- .67	- .01	.02	- .64
Total Work-Life Benefits				< .01	.00	2.55*	< .01	< .01	1.80	< .01	< .01	.55
Finance to Trade							.16	.05	3.38**	.15	.05	3.15**
Leisure to Trade							.13	.06	2.14*	.13	.06	2.12*
Finance to Leisure [†]							.04 [†]	.07 [†]	.52 [†]	.03 [†]	.07 [†]	.40 [†]
Interaction of Total Work-Life Benefits x Industry												
Total WL x Finance to Trade										< .01	< .01	.81
Total WL x Trade to Leisure										.00	< .01	.24
Total WL x Leisure to Finance [†]										< .01 [†]	< .01 [†]	.43 [†]

Note. Industry reference group = Wholesale and Retail Trade industry. [†]These results are from an additional pairwise comparison

between Financial Activities and Leisure and Hospitality industries.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Model Set 2

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Intercept	3.56	.19	18.69	3.83	.21	18.30	3.70	.27	13.83	3.68	.30	12.49
Company Size (log)	< .01	.02	.10	< -.01	.02	-.03	.01	.02	.71	.01	.02	.73
Financial Performance (log)	< -.01	.01	-.26	-.02	.01	-1.12	-.01	.02	-.72	-.01	.02	-.68
Tier 2 + 3 Work-Life Benefits				< .01	< .01	2.93**	< .01	< .01	2.34*	< .01	< .01	.61
Trade to Leisure							-.13	.06	-2.22*	-.13	.06	-2.11*
Finance to Leisure							.03	.07	.42	.02	.07	.30
Interaction of Tier 2 + 3 Work-Life Benefits x Industry												
Total WL x Trade to Leisure										< -.01	< .01	-.21
Total WL x Finance to Leisure										< .01	< .01	.42

Note. Industry reference group = Leisure and Hospitality industry for all models in Model Set 2.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 8*Model Set 3*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2			Model 3			Model 4		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Intercept	3.56	.19	18.69	3.83	.21	18.06	3.72	.32	11.79	3.71	.34	11.05
Company Size (log)	< .01	.02	.10	.00	.02	.01	.02	.02	.74	.02	.02	.75
Financial Performance (log)	< -.01	.01	-.26	-.02	.01	-1.13	-.01	.02	-.71	-.01	.02	-.70
Tier 1 Work-Life Benefits				.00	< .01	-.25	.00	< .01	-.24	.00	< .01	-.15
Tier 2 Work-Life Benefits				< .01	< .01	1.45	< .01	< .01	.50	< .01	< .01	.27
Tier 3 Work-Life Benefits				< .01	< .01	.59	< .01	< .01	1.25	< .01	< .01	1.46
Trade to Finance							-.16	.05	-3.33**	-.16	.05	-3.09**
Leisure to Finance							-.13	.07	-.44	-.02	.07	-.30
Tier2WL x Trade to Finance										.00	.01	-.06
Tier2WL x Leisure to Finance										< .01	.01	-.11
Tier3WL x Trade to Finance										< .01	< .01	-.75
Tier3WL x Leisure to Finance										< -.01	.01	-.12

Note. Industry reference group = Financial Activities industry for all models in Model Set 3.

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 9*Post Hoc Model Set 1: Total Work-Life Benefits*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Intercept	-208.15	24.20	-8.60	-168.80	38.09	-4.43
Company Size (log)	2.92	2.26	1.29	6.80	2.47	2.75*
Financial Performance (log)	8.32	1.60	5.20**	4.48	2.31	1.94
Finance to Trade				24.09	5.93	4.06**
Leisure to Trade				2.18	7.55	.29
Finance to Leisure [†]				21.91 [†]	8.48 [†]	2.58 [†]

Note. Industry reference group = Wholesale and Retail Trade industry. [†]These results are from an

additional pairwise comparison between Financial Activities and Leisure and Hospitality industries.

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

Table 10*Post Hoc Model Set 2: Tier 1 Work-Life Benefits*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Intercept	-90.02	13.98	-6.44	-80.54	22.19	-3.63
Company Size (log)	1.94	1.30	1.49	3.60	1.44	2.50
Financial Performance (log)	3.31	.93	3.58**	1.94	1.35	1.45
Finance to Trade				11.84	3.46	3.43*
Leisure to Trade				3.53	4.40	.80
Finance to Leisure [†]				8.31 [†]	4.94 [†]	1.68 [†]

Note. Industry reference group = Wholesale and Retail Trade industry. [†]These results are from an additional pairwise comparison between Financial Activities and Leisure and Hospitality industries.

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

Table 11*Post Hoc Model Set 3: Tier 2 Work-Life Benefits*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Intercept	-56.45	7.11	-7.95	-44.72	11.01	-4.06
Company Size (log)	.35	.66	.52	1.71	.71	2.39
Financial Performance (log)	2.44	.47	5.20	1.18	.67	1.76
Finance to Trade				8.86	1.72	5.16**
Leisure to Trade				1.48	2.18	.68
Finance to Leisure [†]				7.37 [†]	2.45 [†]	3.01* [†]

Note. Industry reference group = Wholesale and Retail Trade industry. [†]These results are from an additional pairwise comparison between Financial Activities and Leisure and Hospitality industries.

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

Table 12*Post Hoc Model Set 4: Tier 3 Work-Life Benefits*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Intercept	-61.67	8.06	-7.65	-43.53	12.94	-3.37
Company Size (log)	.64	.75	.85	1.50	.84	1.79
Financial Performance (log)	2.56	.53	4.80**	1.36	.78	1.73
Finance to Trade				3.40	2.02	1.69
Leisure to Trade				-2.83	2.56	-1.11
Finance to Leisure [†]				6.23 [†]	2.88 [†]	2.16 [†]

Note. Industry reference group = Wholesale and Retail Trade industry. [†]These results are from an additional pairwise comparison between Financial Activities and Leisure and Hospitality industries.

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

Table 13*Post Hoc Model Set 5: Tier 2 and 3 Work-Life Benefits*

Variable	Model 1			Model 2		
	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>t</i>
Intercept	-118.12	14.02	-8.43	-88.25	22.18	-3.98
Company Size (log)	.98	1.31	.75	3.20	1.44	2.23
Financial Performance (log)	5.00	.93	5.39**	2.53	1.34	1.88
Finance to Trade				12.25	3.45	3.55**
Leisure to Trade				-1.35	4.40	-.31
Finance to Leisure [†]				13.60 [†]	4.94 [†]	2.75* [†]

Note. Industry reference group = Wholesale and Retail Trade industry. [†]These results are from an additional pairwise comparison between Financial Activities and Leisure and Hospitality industries.

* $p < .01$. ** $p < .001$.

Table 14*Summary of Industry Differences*

Variable	Financial/Trade	Financial/Leisure	Leisure/Trade
Work-Life Balance	Differ	Similar	Differ
Total Work-Life Benefits	Differ	Differ	Similar
Tier 1	Differ	Similar	Similar
Tier 2	Differ	Differ	Similar
Tier 3	Similar	Differ	Similar
Tier 2 + 3	Differ	Differ	Similar

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